

ANUARY 31, 2005

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**PUSHING THE
DEMOCRATS
FROM BELOW**

Robert L.
Borosage
John Nichols

**THE MEDIA'S
NEW
COLD WAR**
Stephen F. Cohen

**THE PUNDIT
SCANDALS**
Eric Alterman

**MUSIC FOR
CHANGE**
Jenny Toomey
and
Rob Rosenthal

**JUDGING
PINOCHET**
Peter Kornbluh

**IN THE SHADOW
OF THE TOWERS**
Andrew Rice

**THE REBIRTH
OF MoMA**
Arthur C. Danto

NONE SO BLIND

The Next Four Years of George W. Bush

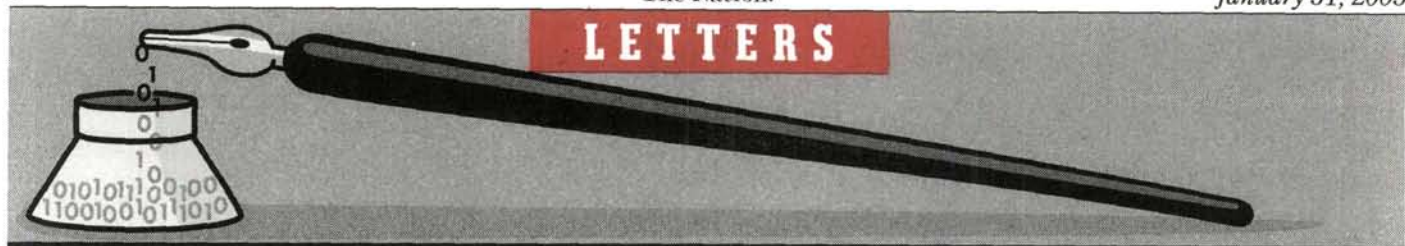


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CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

BUT IS IT ART?

Hidden Valley Lake, Calif.

■ The January 3 cover defaces a great photograph of a farm worker mother and child by Dorothea Lange. There are enough contemporary Wal-Mart workers and photographers covering their situation to use an appropriate image and not insult one of our greatest photographers.

ERNEST AND GRACE LOWE

Oak Park, Ill.

■ If there are awards for covers, Gene Case and Stephen Kling should win one. The January 3 cover featuring Dorothea Lange's classic photograph "Migrant Mother," updated to depict the present day's exploited worker, is pure genius—the best "readymade" since Duchamp. I am a high school photography teacher and would love to get a poster of this cover for my classroom. I teach a whole unit on social reformers like Lange and Lewis Hine and try to make it relevant to today. Case and Kling did just that in one stroke.

FRAN SAMPSON

SCHADENFREUDEAN SLIP

Boston

■ The many progressive critics of Wal-Mart "enjoyed a bit of schadenfreude" [Liza Featherstone, "Down and Out in Discount America," Jan. 3] and the TV series *Desperate Housewives* "showcases...outright schadenfreude" [Richard Goldstein, "Red Sluts, Blue Sluts," Jan. 3]. I ran, faster than an editor I think, to my Sylvia Brownrigg: "Often the people Pi met in Mendocino wanted to hear these terrible stories, the personal disasters, or they quoted them back to her from what they'd read, with a certain glitter in their eyes—giving Pi the chance to wonder again as she once had in a Wittgenstein seminar why there wasn't a word in English for schadenfreude." Do the critics of Wal-Mart and the salacious women of *Desperate Housewives* wallow together in that very human pleasure taken in other people's misery?

JIM MARKO

FLATTERY GETS HIM NOWHERE

Washington, DC

■ Jonathan Steele's December 20 "Ukraine's Untold Story" was long on flattery for the US government's "subtle and sophisticated" effort to massively interfere in Ukraine's recent elections. While we make it a policy never to reject flattery, in this case we have to call these allegations of conspiracy—rehashed from a previous *Guardian* piece by the same author—just plain wrong. Along with the EU, the UN, the OSCE and other democratic nations, our candidate of

choice has always been the Ukrainian people who have said "Enough!" to attempts to cling to power by manipulating election results.

Our democracy assistance programs are designed to help people create the conditions to make their own choices—about their leaders, their societies and their futures. We're proud of these programs.

Along with the EU, the UN and the OSCE, we applaud the courage and idealism of all those Ukrainians who braved official intimidation and the freezing cold to peacefully pave the way for a democratic future. Steele's article recalls specious arguments that we faced years ago regarding nations such as Poland and the Baltic states: that we should consign these countries to a gray zone or a "sphere of influence," where their fate rests in the hands of outside powers. This was a bad idea in the past and is a bad idea today. The future of Ukraine should belong to the Ukrainian people and no other.

A. ELIZABETH JONES

Assistant Secretary of European and Eurasian Affairs, Department of State

STEELE REPLIES

London

■ A. Elizabeth Jones accepts my flattery but evades my critical points. Why, for example, is US electoral interventionism selective—in Ukraine, but not oil-rich dictatorships like Azerbaijan or Kazakhstan? I alleged no conspiracy. US programs were blatant. Claiming they were impartial merely repeats an old cover story when the facts show that US-funded Ukrainian websites and radio stations failed to give democratic coverage of the campaign. They supported one candidate, and the State Department was quite content.

JONATHAN STEELE

DID SOMEONE SAY 'RULE OF LAW'?

Williston, Fla.

■ In "Gonzales: Wrong Choice" [Dec. 6], David Cole cites Alberto Gonzales's relentless bias against those scheduled for execution (even ignoring evidence of innocence) in his recommendations to George W. Bush when he was governor of Texas. Gonzales went on to urge military tribunals for suspected terrorists, disfavored any civilian participation, opposed giving defendants a presumption of innocence (contrary to "innocent until proven guilty") and was responsible for the "torture memo" being issued. All of this is in line with a police state.

Cole goes on to remark that we should ask Gonzales whether he can restore the rule of law. Nowhere does Cole consider that this Administration and Gonzales are not concerned with the rule of law, because they expect to establish

their own "rule of law." Woe unto us and our civil liberties.

PATRICIA M. KOSTER

Langley, British Columbia

■ Perhaps the questioning of Mr. Gonzales should include shackling him naked in an uncomfortable position.

BETTY REUBART

HIS 2 CENTS ON LIEBLING

Charlottetown, PEI, Canada

■ As he would have turned 100 this year, it surely is appropriate to celebrate A.J. Liebling, as David Thomson and the compilers of Liebling's works have done ["An Appetite for Liebling," Dec. 13]. As one who knew him fairly well, perhaps I may add my two cents.

I was one of several young *New Yorker* "Talk of the Town" reporters immediately after World War II to be asked by Mr. Shawn to assist Liebling with "leg work" (research). My first assignment was to uncover in children's books by an obscure author a tribal African term for meat hunger, which Liebling employed in a "Wayward Press" piece about the newspapers' exaggerated reporting on a supposed domestic meat shortage. ("The Wayward Press" gave Joe a big following among newspapermen, who wrote or wired him from all over the country.) Following a number of leg-work missions, I was asked by Joe to perform the same duties in connection with a series on *Time* magazine for which he had been contracted by *Colliers* magazine. For about a year, in 1949 and 1950, both of us in the pay of *Colliers*, I saw Liebling almost daily. At that time he had no permanent address, so he hired a two-room suite in the Seville Hotel, a somewhat run-down establishment in the East 20s, where he set up his typewriter and interviewed former *Time* correspondents.

He was also finishing another assignment for *Colliers* on Col. Robert McCormick and the *Chicago Tribune*, so he was occasionally absent in the Windy City. Lucille Spectorsky, who was not yet his bride, was a frequent presence at the Seville. Lucille, a strikingly handsome woman about half a head taller than Liebling (whom, incidentally, I would not describe as "small," as did Thomson; he was at least 5' 9" in height), brought some joy into Joe's life; not least his pleasure in being seen with her about town. Yes, Liebling liked to reminisce about the war, which was a bond between us, as I had served with the Third Army in Europe. We also had friends in common, as relatives of mine had been part of the same Far Rockaway summer milieu in which Joe grew up. One of our common friends was Fred Schwed Jr., a former Wall Streeter with a ready wit who had written *Where Are the Customers' Yachts?* Liebling was not witty like

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EDITORIALS

None So Blind

A triumphant George W. Bush, emboldened by finally being elected to office, will inaugurate his second term on January 20. Festooned with gospel imagery, his address will rededicate this nation to waging the "war on terror" and championing democracy abroad, and call for building a new "ownership society" at home. His lavish celebration will produce limousine gridlock in the capital, as right-wing Republicans, corporate chieftains, lobbyists and retainers pay tribute to the President who has consolidated their hold on all three branches of government.

Bush starts this second term blind to the consequences of the havoc he has wrought and misleading the very voters who returned him to office. His record is one of failure: aggressive war on Iraq that has led to thousands of American and Iraqi deaths; officially endorsed policies that led to torture in Abu Ghraib, Guantánamo and elsewhere; a botched assault on terror that has isolated America while replenishing the ranks of terrorists; exploding fiscal and trade deficits, with the dollar sinking in value; inequality not seen since the Gilded Age; the worst jobs record since Hoover; and indifference to the threat of catastrophic climate change combined with growing dependence on foreign oil. Meanwhile, Bush's failures have increased Americans' kitchen-table concerns: good jobs leaving, replaced by jobs with lower wages and fewer benefits; a broken healthcare system, with millions unable to afford adequate care; failed promises to invest in schools along with cuts in college grants at a time of soaring costs; a retreat on clean air and water.

Now Bush promises to make things worse. The ideologues who crafted the disaster in Iraq have been rewarded and retained; the realists who dissented have been purged. His first legislative pro-

posal is to curb the rights of citizens to recover for damages caused by the negligence, fraud or malpractice of corporations or doctors. His highest priority is to privatize Social Security, most likely by slashing guaranteed benefits by some 40 percent while borrowing \$2 trillion to pay for private accounts that will primarily reward Wall Street. His budget will extend the tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans while cutting investment in education, healthcare and support for essentials from food stamps to home heating for the elderly. He's announced a renewed effort to pack the courts with right-wing judicial reactionaries intent on rolling back the rights and liberties of Americans and returning to the days when labor unions and environmental, wage and safety standards were outlawed as illegal restraints on trade.

Bush won re-election with the most negative campaign in memory, wrapping himself in the flag, assailing his opponent's character and practicing a politics of fear and division. Right-wing appeals mobilized his base while he disdained efforts to woo moderates and independents. He now pledges to govern the same way, using the right to discipline GOP dissenters and scorning bipartisanship, even on matters of war and peace.

The Bush team is sophisticated in propaganda, well versed in the uses of deception to avoid accountability. Bush's policies, however, are damaging this country, and his priorities are not widely shared. Democrats would be well-advised to oppose them, but with the fainthearted among them already wringing their hands and sounding retreat, an aroused progressive movement will be needed to provide the necessary backbone. A majority of Americans are already experiencing buyers' remorse; Bush's razor-thin victory on election day may have witnessed the height of his popularity. The central question of his second term is how soon Americans, recognizing their error, will demand a change in direction.

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A Step for Voting Reform

Something good for American democracy happened on January 6. In its first potentially decisive consideration of a challenge to a presidential election in 128 years, at least some members of Congress acknowledged the decrepit state of our election system and pledged to do something about it.

Now, as happened four years ago, with generally disappointing results, election reform is again on the table. We progressives must do our utmost to keep it there until real reform is won.

That will require making it a high priority and continuing the kind of effort and coordination among civil rights, labor and other constituencies that helped persuade Senator Barbara Boxer to join Representative Stephanie Tubbs Jones in not accepting Ohio's electors. Although in the end she and Tubbs Jones were unsuccessful in their quest, Boxer's action led many of her fellow senators to join her in condemning "a flawed system which must be fixed now."

Representative John Conyers, who as much as any one person deserves credit for January 6, has announced that he will soon be introducing an election reform bill. And, after years of talk, there is something approaching a consensus—at least among those interested in easy, accurate voting and fair campaigns—on the essential reforms that are needed.

Nationally, we want a floor on voting mechanics and rights. We want a national right to vote, ideally enshrined in the Constitution, to guard against voter suppression or other basic unfairness. We want universal registration, recognizable in every election district in the country, and multiple opportunities before election time to prove required residence. We want consistency in ballot design, and maximum ease of use. We also want consistent, nationwide rules on voter ID requirements and on how to count and recount ballots. We want every state and national election day to be a public holiday. We want nonpartisan election administration. We want computer voting technology that can be examined by people outside the companies providing it and a secure paper trail on all votes cast. We want a nonpartisan national election commission—populated by recognized experts in voting machine technology, statistical analysis and polling, and national and comparative politics—to evaluate the accuracy and representativeness of our election performance regularly and make recommendations for improvement. We want Congress to come back to election reform as an issue in each session. And, however long it takes, we want to abolish the Electoral College and move to direct election of the President.

Adopting such an agenda would be only a start. Beyond this, we want people to be able to enter the electoral fray based on the content of their ideas, accomplishments and character, not the size of their wallets or those of people to whom they are beholden. We want a more democratic system of campaign finance at both the federal and the state levels, enough public funding to insure basic competitiveness, a ban on for-profit broadcasters charging money for campaign ads, and ample public means to communicate with the people.

Finally, we want fairly designed Congressional districts. While

COMMENT

being required to respect the one-person, one-vote principle, states should again be free to design Congressional districts as they see fit (as they were through most of America's history, up to 1967). If they want single-member districts and winner-take-all rules, let them have them. But if they want to move to versions of plural nomination (*aka* "fusion" of the sort the New Party fought for and New York's Working Families Party thrives on), instant runoff voting or more classic proportional representation, let them do that. The same should continue to apply to states' own districts for legislative, county and municipal offices. Our low-participation election system, governed almost exclusively by winner-take-all rules in single-member districts, is inconsistent with our own history and inadequate to the recognized diversity of our citizenship.

A system reformed this way—voting made easy, electoral competition made fair, states encouraged to insure full representation, and results on these terms known and regularly evaluated—would be more appropriate to a democratic America. We should not miss this chance to try again, to get it.

COMMENT

Dr. Dean Calling

Howard Dean elbowed his way into the 2005 contest for the chairmanship of the Democratic National Committee with the same unbridled energy, litany of ideas big and small and outsized self-confidence that he brought to the 2004 campaign for the party's presidential nomination. And, just as Dean transformed the presidential race, so he has transformed the contest for a position that in recent years has been little more than that of a bagman for candidates who don't actually want to touch the special-interest money.

Dean is not assured of winning the chairmanship. Before the former Vermont governor announced his candidacy on January 11—in the form of an "I'm running" e-mail to that very long list of Deaniacs—Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid and House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi had sent signals that they would back former Congressman Tim Roemer, a member of the 9/11 Commission who officially entered the race in more classic Washington fashion: with an appearance on ABC-TV's *This Week*. Former Texas Representative Martin Frost, former Denver Mayor Wellington Webb, former Ohio Democratic Party chairman David Leland, New Democrat Network president Simon Rosenberg, and Donnie Fowler, who briefly managed Wesley Clark's 2004 presidential bid, are mounting less likely candidacies. And Kate Michelman, the former president of NARAL Pro-Choice America, is pondering a bid, inspired at least in part by the fact that Roemer is a foe of abortion rights and that some other candidates have talked about the need to de-emphasize the choice issue.

But it is Dean who can put the race on the front pages and the evening news, and that is precisely where it belongs.

The Democratic Party is a mess. Its decline at the federal, state and local levels, while not universal, has been proceeding for the better part of a decade, and although the miserable results of 2004

contests should have forced a radical reassessment, the party has yet to decide whether it wants to fight its way back to relevance. With Dean there is no uncertainty; while other contenders wrestle with the question of how to position the party in the media-hyped "moral-values" debate, Dean's letter of announcement eschewed triangulation in favor of truth: "That word—'values'—has lately become a codeword for appeasement of the right-wing fringe. But when political calculations make us soften our opposition to bigotry, or sign on to policies that add to the burden of ordinary Americans, we have abandoned our true values." The man who has indicated his willingness to trade another shot at the presidency for the thankless task of reminding Democrats that an opposition party is actually supposed to oppose the party in power launched his run for the chairmanship with a refreshingly blunt assessment of the partisan zeitgeist: "The Democratic Party will not win elections or build a lasting majority solely by changing its rhetoric, nor will we win by adopting the other side's positions. We must say what we mean—and mean real change when we say it."

Dean is, of course, correct. But is he the correct candidate for the chairmanship? His presidential run was inspired in its use of new technologies and grassroots fundraising, in its willingness to get ahead on issues like the war and in the overall boldness of its approach—all characteristics that a resurgent Democratic Party must emulate. But Dean's penchant for causing unnecessary controversy, his often testy relations with the media and lingering memories of his 2004 campaign's collapse will cause qualms even among some progressives. Ultimately, however, Dean is the candidate against whom the 447 delegates to the party's winter meeting on February 10-12 will measure the other contenders. And the physician will have plenty of opportunity at upcoming party meetings in St. Louis, Sacramento and New York to make the case that he's got the cure for what ails the country's oldest political party.

Democrats need a great big, high-profile fight over what they want their party to be, and Dean's candidacy will give them that. What remains to be seen is whether it will give them a rationale for finishing the internal fight and finally taking the battle to George W. Bush and the Republicans.

JOHN NICHOLS

Geezerstock

Confessions of an Aging Hippie

When I was a kid—this was before television—the radio was my best friend. Lionel Barrymore, brother of fellow actors John and Ethel, great-uncle of Drew, was confined to a wheelchair and played the crippled Dr. Gillespie in the original *Dr. Kildare* movies. He also had a radio program where he would spout maxims and dispense homilies. In his authoritative, quavering voice, he once said, "Happiness is not a station you'll arrive at, it's the train you're traveling on." That single sentence immediately became my entire philosophy of life.

A few decades later, I would read in *Hollywood Is a Four-Letter Town* by James Bacon: "Lionel Barrymore once told me, as he sat in his wheelchair crippled with arthritis, that he would have killed himself long ago if it hadn't been for [film producer] Louis B. Mayer: 'L.B. gets me \$400 worth of cocaine a day

to ease my pain. I don't know where he gets it. And I don't care. But I bless him every time it puts me to sleep."

So happiness wasn't a radio station you'd arrive at, it was the wheelchair you were traveling on, and for Lionel Barrymore it must have been an express trip all the way.

I remember publishing my satirical, countercultural magazine, *The Realist* (1958–2001). I remember *People* labeling me "father of the underground press." (I immediately demanded a paternity test.) I remember celebrating the Summer of Love in 1967. I remember naming and founding, with Abbie Hoffman and Jerry

Annals of Outrage

In 2004 the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the Inspector Generals (IG) in various departments of the federal government issued reports revealing fraud, mismanagement and corruption. Here is my list of the Bush Administration's Ten Most Outrageous Scandals thus far uncovered by government investigators:

1. *Halliburton's Corruption*. Nine different reports compiled by the GAO, the Coalition Provisional Authority's IG and the Defense Contract Audit Agency faulted Halliburton's performance in Iraq, where it has been awarded more than \$10 billion in US contracts. The government investigators cited, among other things, significant cost overruns, the overcharging of the Defense Department (and taxpayers) by \$61 million, illegal kickbacks, failure to police subcontractors' billing and unauthorized expenses at the Kuwait Hilton Hotel. The list of abuses will likely get longer in 2005, as multiple criminal investigations into Halliburton's work pick up steam.

2. *Iraq's Decline*. In June 2004 the GAO provided a bleak assessment of Iraq after fourteen months of US military occupation, documenting that in critical areas like security, electricity and the judicial system Iraq is worse off now than it was before the war.

3. *Abu Ghraib Prison Torture*. In late August Maj. Gen. George Fay released an official Army report charging that US military personnel committed torture and that civilian contractors and military intelligence interrogators played a greater role in abusing prisoners than previously thought. The Fay report blamed "a lack of discipline on the part of leaders and soldiers" and a "failure or lack of leadership" by senior military commanders in Iraq.

4. *The CIA's Pre-9/11 Intelligence Failures*. Early this month the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* reported that the CIA's IG will soon release a report criticizing the CIA's senior leadership for failing to "direct more resources to counterterrorism and inadequately analyz[ing] the threat from Al Qaeda" before the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. For the first time, a government report will hold senior CIA officials accountable, singling out George Tenet and at least eleven others for "not liv[ing] up to the standards of professional conduct required of them," says the *Post*.

5. *HHS's Deceptive Ad Campaign*. In May the GAO concluded that the Health and Human Services Department conducted a secret propaganda campaign that illegally spent taxpayer money to produce and distribute videos touting the Administration's Medicare prescription drug law. And this January, the GAO said that the Office of National Drug Con-

trol Policy ads warning of the dangers of drug abuse (aired just before last year's Super Bowl) were a form of "covert propaganda" because they promoted their policies without identifying their origin. The ads, said one GAO official, were "paid announcements" at taxpayer expense that shamelessly sought to blur the lines between government propaganda and a legitimate, independent news feature.

6. *HHS's Scully Scandal*. In September the GAO found that HHS had illegally paid the salary of former Medicare chief Thomas Scully, who threatened to fire veteran Medicare actuary Richard Foster if he told Congress that the Administration's Medicare prescription drug legislation would cost \$100 billion more than the White House figure. According to the *Washington Post*, "A 1998 federal law prohibits an agency from paying a federal official who prevents another employee from communicating with Congress."

7. *Government-wide Accounting Problems*. In December the GAO reported that the federal government's accounting practices are unreliable and might not meet widely accepted accounting standards. The report gives the lie to GOP claims that it is a sound steward of taxpayer money.

8. *Sex Education Misinformation*. A report that comes to us thanks to Representative Henry Waxman revealed that most of the government-funded abstinence-only sex education programs were giving students false information. One curriculum rejects "the popular claim that condoms help prevent the spread of STDs [sexually transmitted diseases]" because it "is not supported by the data."

9. *CAPPS II's Failures*. In February the GAO uncovered significant gaps in privacy protections in the Administration's passenger profiling program developed by the Transportation Security Administration. The Computer Assisted Passenger Prescreening System (CAPPS II) stored personal information in passengers' profiles, provided inadequate appeals procedures and failed to safeguard the accuracy of its databases.

10. *The Real Costs of War*. In July the GAO criticized the Administration for underestimating by \$12.3 billion the cost of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. This is part of a pattern of deception by the Administration, which has repeatedly hidden the real costs of the Iraq invasion and occupation from Congress and the public.

What's in store for 2005? We anticipate scandals to come. But it should be noted that the GAO may face White House-proposed budget cuts and that the Bush Administration has developed a hostile policy toward nonpartisan IGs in various federal agencies. Instead of shooting the messenger, the Bush approach is defunding the investigator.

KATRINA VANDEN HEUVEL

COMMENT

Rubin, the Yippies (the Youth International Party) and going to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968 to protest the Vietnam War. I remember the Woodstock Festival in 1969—the music, the mud, the sense of community, the bare breasts, the warning not to ingest the brown acid.

Suddenly I'm 72 years old. I have been automatically accepted into the league of senior citizens, except in Portland, Oregon, where they refer to us as "honored" citizens. Whatever title gets me on the bus and into the movies cheaper is fine with me.

I've noticed that the network news shows seem to be aimed at middle-aged and elderly viewers. They are all sponsored by prescription drugs promising to prevent erectile dysfunction. The Viagra commercial—with background music by Queen singing "We Are the Champions"—features men dancing in the streets, ecstatic at the prospect of asking their doctors if a free sample is right for them. Personally, I don't have any problem getting a hard-on, but I've begun to worry that it's really rigor mortis setting in, on the installment plan.

Although any part of my body can attack me without warning, for no reason at all (OK, maybe revenge), I'm in pretty good shape for my age, except for an awkward, twisted gait due to a police beating in 1979, while covering the trial of Dan White for the murder of San Francisco Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk. I got caught in the post-verdict riot, and my injuries were exacerbated by hereditary arthritis. I went to a New Age healer who wondered if a brace might help. She placed one hand on my hip and with the other she held the hand of her receptionist.

"Yes," uttered the receptionist.

"Yes," repeated the New Age healer.

"I don't mean to be rude," I interjected, "but would you mind if I look for a second opinion... maybe from another receptionist?"

My friends have grown older, and the musicians we listened to in the sixties have grown older along with us. I imagine myself emceeing the Geezerstock Festival, standing on an outdoor stage, looking out at a vast audience of gray-haired hippies with paunches and granny glasses, as I speak in a slow, shaky voice.

"Are you having fun?... I can't hear you!... No, I mean I *really* can't hear you!... I have an announcement. The Port-o-Potties that are painted green should be used only by those who have to pee at least once an hour. The Port-o-Potties that are painted red should be used only by those who have to pee less than once an hour.... It's now my pleasure to introduce the Rolling Stones. They've been very busy—gathering moss. Here comes Mick Jagger with the aid of a walker. And Keith Richards is being carried out on a gurney. Oh, wait, I've just been handed another announcement: Warning—do not take the brown antacid."

Two years ago, I wrote a piece for the AARP magazine, *Modern Maturity*. When my subscription copy arrived—the issue that my article was supposed to be in—it wasn't in there. I checked with an editor, who asked how old I was. I told her that I was 70, but I didn't understand what difference that made. She explained that there were three editions: one for readers 50 and older, one for readers 60 and older and one for readers 70 and older. I was too old to read my own article.

My dentist, in his early 50s, had a copy in his waiting room. I felt like I was cheating as I leafed through the pages, but it did in-

clude my article. There was a time when I was considered too young to read certain things, and now I'm considered too old to read certain things. Apparently something must've happened to me in between. Like, say, my life? But, as Lionel Barrymore once said on the radio, "When you stop growing old, you're dead."

I still write columns and articles, I still perform stand-up satire—my sixth album, *The Zen Bastard Rides Again*, has been released—and I'm finally working on my long-awaited (by me) first novel, about a contemporary comedian, inspired by my friendship and association with Lenny Bruce. I've been nominated for a 2005 Grammy Award for my album notes accompanying *Let the Buyer Beware*, a six-CD Bruce anthology. I keep wondering what Lenny would be saying in these insane times.

In 1964 Lenny was unable to get work because he'd been arrested so many times that night clubs were afraid they'd lose their liquor licenses. Lenny's work was his life, so, with his permission, I wrote his obituary—this was two years before he actually died. Several years later, a short-lived magazine, *Cheetah*, published a fake obituary of me without my permission. Associated Press called, and I explained that it was a hoax.

"Are you sure?"

"Of course," I replied. "I'd tell you if I was dead."

On WBAI radio in New York, Bob Fass was taking phone calls on his midnight free-form show, *Radio Unnameable*. Listeners were discussing whether that obit was legit. Then someone called and said, "You know, I didn't even know that Paul Krassner was alive until I heard that he was dead."

And, at that precise moment, my sense of false humility was finally restored.

PAUL KRASSNER

Paul Krassner (paulkrassner.com) is the author of *Murder at the Conspiracy Convention and Other American Absurdities*, introduction by George Carlin (*Barricade*). He is editor of the anthology *Magic Mushrooms and Other Highs: From Toad Slime to Ecstasy (Ten Speed)*.

CALVIN TRILLIN

HUNKY DORY IN IRAQ

(A Song Sung in the Shower Every Morning by George W. Bush)

It's all just hunky dory in Iraq.

Yes, thanks to us, they've got their country back.

We showed the folks who thought our nerve would crack

And folks who were reluctant to attack—

Those girly men like Schroeder and Chirac.

Yes, things are hunky dory in Iraq.

La dee dah.

La dee dah.

La dee dah.

In Fact . . .

DEATH SQUADS—THEY'RE BACK!

■ Everything old is new again? Perhaps at the Pentagon. *Newsweek* reported recently that military officials frustrated with the worsening situation in Iraq are considering “the Salvador option.” Under this plan, the Pentagon would use Special Forces to assist Iraqi militia units—made up of Kurds or Shiites—that would target Sunni insurgents and sympathizers. These paramilitary squads might engage in assassinations or kidnappings. It is not unusual for a military facing an insurgency to develop counterinsurgency units within the chain of command. But as the magazine notes, this plan is reminiscent of the 1980s US policy that supported the El Salvador military, which was tied to death squads and fielded brutal counterinsurgency units that massacred innocent civilians while pursuing leftist rebels. Back then, the death squads killed American nuns, Jesuit priests and Archbishop Oscar Romero. The US-trained military slaughtered about 800 peasants at El Mozote, and the Reagan Administration—with State Department official Elliott Abrams leading the way—denied that the horrific event had occurred. Today Abrams works in the White House, and Pentagon planners pine for a return to El Salvador-style tactics. Empowering unaccountable paramilitary units that operate outside military channels would be a dangerous move. The El Salvador strategy yielded horrendous abuse and atrocities. It should be repudiated, not emulated.

JUST SAY NO TO AIDS

■ Esther Kaplan writes: December wasn't a good month for abstinence education. Representative Henry Waxman came out with a report documenting that federally funded abstinence-only curriculums were littered with absurd falsehoods—that sweat can transmit HIV, for example. Then new data from the National Center for Health Statistics showed that the number of sexually active women skipping birth control had jumped by 42 percent, a spike that some experts say could be fallout from the abstinence-only program's ban on mentioning contraceptives—unless to exaggerate their failure rates. But George W. Bush's faith remains unshaken. He picked longtime abstinence advocate Anita Smith as the new co-chair of his AIDS advisory council and elevated Deputy Health Secretary Claude Allen, known as the abstinence enforcer within HHS, to the post of domestic policy adviser. Smith and her husband have run a string of AIDS organizations that teach “risk avoidance.” According to former CDC official Margaret Scarlett, Americans for a Sound AIDS Policy, under the Smiths' leadership, even refused to distribute condom information in the early 1990s, when it was required to do so by a federal prevention grant. (Their funding was pulled.) During his tenure as Virginia's health secretary, Allen proved himself a “family values” true believer, aggressively intervening to keep a comatose man on life support, opposing a child health program because it would cover abortions for victims of incest, and working with the Smiths to institute abstinence education across his state. He's on the board of an organization called Peacemaker Ministries, which takes a hard-line stance against litigation, favoring instead “biblically-based mediation.” The perfect man to spearhead

Bush's campaign against trial lawyers and to expand his abstinence and faith-based initiatives. Leaders on the Christian right were delighted; as Gary Bauer told his supporters, “The President would have been hard-pressed to make a better choice.”

DEATH OF A UNION MAN IN BAGHDAD

■ David Bacon writes: Hadi Salih, the international secretary of the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions, was brutally murdered by unknown assassins in Baghdad on January 4—bound hand and foot, tortured, strangled and then shot—at home in front of his family. There have been a string of attacks on Iraqi union activists and workers in recent months—railroad workers killed, textile strikers shot, the transport union building in Baghdad shelled, union leaders arrested. But Salih's murder, bearing the hallmarks of Saddam's old secret police, is the most vicious yet. The political space needed for unions and other organizations of civil society to develop is shrinking under these attacks, which have come from several sources—the government, the insurgents and the US military. Salih was a printer, a longtime unionist, a veteran of Saddam's prisons and a political activist who, from exile, sought the end of that regime. AFL-CIO president John Sweeney noted that Salih “put aside all thoughts of his own personal safety... [and] returned to Iraq as soon as it was possible, to help make Iraq a better place to live and work.” US Labor Against the War urged that the murderers of Hadi Salih and other Iraqi workers and unionists be brought to justice and called for an end to the US occupation with the goal of achieving “a safe and secure society in which people can exercise their rights as workers and unionists without fearing death and terror.”

GUILTY WITHOUT CHARGES

■ While at the Justice Department Michael Chertoff, Bush's nominee to head Homeland Security, installed the post-9/11 policies that resulted in the roundup, detention and deportation of hundreds of Muslims who had no criminal or terrorist ties. The travails of thirteen of them, who were held for weeks or months, then deported, are the subject of a recent report by the ACLU. The title sums up the disturbing findings: *Worlds Apart: How Deporting Immigrants After September 11 Tore Families Apart and Shattered Communities*. More than a third of the people living in Brooklyn's “Little Pakistan” were either deported or left voluntarily after 9/11, decimating the neighborhood.

NEWS OF THE WEAK IN REVIEW

■ Tsunami-devastated Sri Lanka received a visit from Senate majority leader Bill Frist, accompanied by Senator Mary Landrieu. Frist, a cardiologist, apparently found no need for emergency quadruple bypasses, so he confined himself to a quick inspection of sites near Colombo, the capital. The arrival of Frist had the virtue, according to the AP, of galvanizing the local Red Cross to set up a clinic, “complete with flags and banners, a few hours before the U.S. senators visited.” Before leaving, Frist organized a private photo-op. “Get some devastation in the back,” he instructed a staff member.

PATRICIA J. WILLIAMS

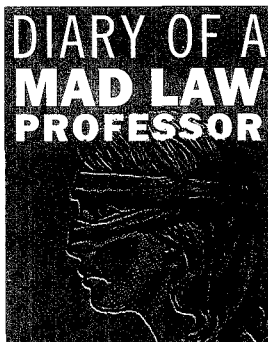
Buying In, Selling Out

The black pseudo leader is a parasite," wrote black pseudo-leader Armstrong Williams in October 2004. "He nourishes himself on the suffering of others." Now let me tell you frankly that if a white pseudo-leader had uttered those words I'd be afraid. Paranoid that I am, I'd tend to read in all kinds of poisonous historical reverberations. Out of the mouth of a smiley-faced black pseudo-leader, however, it sounds, well... only merely kinda pseudo-poisonous somehow.

The Armstrong Williams mess is one of the more interesting *amuse-gueules* on the menu of recent political scandal. Armstrong Williams is a racebaiting scold and opportunistic so-called friend of a friend of Oprah (he was once a business partner of Steadman Graham, her boyfriend). As a paid political operative of the Education Department, he accepted more than \$240,000 in exchange for promoting George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind Act on his television show and in his syndicated newspaper column. Williams, it is said, was specifically contracted to tout the act to a black audience. It is a sign of the times, I suppose, that the news has been greeted with relatively muted response. Dan Rather's careless reportage about Bush's and Kerry's pasts provoked front-page reflections about television ethics, as well as a major investigation of CBS. But Williams's is really the more extraordinary story: Going by two prior Government Accountability Office opinions, such a contract with the government is illegal. It is against the law for the federal government to pay commentators covertly to market its policies. But the media focus has mostly been on Armstrong himself, as though he were the entire problem.

"Please know that I supported school vouchers long before the Department of Education ran a single ad on my TV Show. I did not change my views just because my PR firm was receiving paid advertising," said Williams in his website apology. It was smooth, this—he managed to conflate his personal beliefs with the innocence of his journalism, as though the steadfastness of his position made him any less of a hired hack, or as though his personal beliefs displaced any duty of the journalistic profession. He then went on to imply that he thought his behavior would have been just dandy if judged by the measure of business ethics: "I now realize that I have to create inseparable boundaries between my role as a small businessman and my role as an independent commentator." This is smoother still: While seemingly acknowledging a boundary, it actually glosses over that part of the conflict of interest involved in the government's contract for propaganda, and instead turns it into a palatable congruence, a natural outgrowth of the entrepreneurial spirit.

It was not the first time that the Administration was accused of having illegally subsidized pro-Bush advertisements disguised as news. The Office of National Drug Control Policy as well as the Department of Health and Human Services, it seems, had paid a handsome price to produce videos touting the President's drug benefits package. The videos employed actors who delivered



positive coverage as though they were reporters. In addition, the Census Bureau has subsidized a video extolling the fall of gender barriers, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention did the same regarding the flu. And, of course, all this comes on the heels of reports that the Pentagon plans to use the media to plant disinformation as a way of influencing opinion abroad.

These are hard times for noble ideals. Infotainment has dulled us, I suppose. The very notion of independence from paid influence seems like a foreign concept these days. "Everyone in media's been paid," says a rationalizing voice in radio talk-show land. (The question of who does the paying was left hanging.) "Only a dope would believe that they're not all pushing something." Indeed, when Arnold Schwarzenegger was running for governor he admitted that he got "donations from businesses and individuals absolutely, because they're powerful interests who control things." There was such a calm slippage of causality in his statement: "They" are powerful and control things, so of course he should accept money from them. He said it as though donations were a way of informing himself. You wouldn't want to leave home without a warm little scarf of the right financial backing. (Later he revised that to deny that he had ever accepted money from any "single-issue trade groups.")

As Armstrong Williams put it, encompassingly enough to echo everyone from Tom DeLay to Alberto Gonzales to the juvenile delinquent of your choice: "I am paying the price"—how's that for delicious irony?—"I just want to assure you that this will never happen again...." But this does happen, over and over again. Almost anything that comes out of the Administration is overcast with a pall of received cynicism. "It's exciting times for the Iraqi people," says our President brightly, and the collective eyeballs just roll. Beyond the obvious and endlessly tragic example of this war, this all-talk-and-no-listen stance has cost us greatly. The science community complains that the Bush Administration has appointed people to scientific regulatory positions who have no qualifications and who agree that global warming is not a problem and that stem-cell research is the equivalent of baby-killing. This has increased public distrust of science and of the government and is creating such a migration of scientists that our great research centers are beginning to be reassembled outside the country.

A truly free press ought to operate without the constant tally of bottom-dollar equation for each and every word. Surely the Founding Fathers did not anticipate the kind of bald ends-justify-the-means thinking displayed by the Education Department; asked why it had disregarded the law (to say nothing of universal codes of media ethics), it stated that "the Department has undertaken broad outreach to help parents—particularly those in minority and low-income communities—take advantage of the No Child Left Behind law." When Armstrong Williams was asked the same question, he responded: "I don't know anything about these kinds of documents."

ERIC ALTERMAN

Pundit Limbo: How Low Can They Go?

While often annoying, punditry is an honorable and necessary corollary to media in search of the holy grail of objectivity. But the business has fallen into a pathetic state in recent times, as is clear from three scandals, the reactions to which are no less indicative of how low we now go.

The first and best-known of these transgressions is that involving Robert Novak, who, alone among professional journalists, proved willing to play patsy for the Bush Administration and endanger US national security by deliberately revealing the identity of CIA agent Valerie Plame, wife of Administration critic Joseph Wilson. Shameful as they were, Novak's actions were nevertheless predictable in a career defined by his eagerness to serve right-wing politicians and causes. While he occasionally exploited his political connections for personal financial gain—in the form of high-priced, off-the-record briefings for wealthy executives featuring high-profile Republican officials—Novak mostly exploits his access for fame. *Washington Post* editors and CNN executives allow him his transgressions, and the Washington establishment continues to embrace him because he is so embedded in the city's corrupt journalistic/political culture that he can no longer be separated from it. Even the spectacle of two journalists, *Time*'s Matthew Cooper and the *New York Times*'s Judith Miller, facing prison in the Plame case when it is clearly Novak who is at fault seems to have done nothing to shake his employers' confidence.

Ironically, although CNN has parted company with Tucker Carlson and has announced that it will cancel *Crossfire*, with its new chief, Jonathan Klein, endorsing Jon Stewart's now-famous indictment that the show's "partisan hackery...is hurting America," the far more offensive Novak remains in Klein's good graces. Carlson is a talented conservative journalist who, like almost every other television pundit, has allowed himself to become a sitcom-style caricature as fame and (Washington-level) riches beckoned. A moderate right-winger by contemporary standards, Carlson complained that he was often expected to take the Administration's position even when he disagreed with it, demonstrating the fundamental dishonesty of the entire setup.

It is not an accident that the two sides on *Crossfire* were divided between political professionals on one side and hack journalists on the other. In the far-right-dominated culture of cable TV, no liberal journalist has been invited to rise to the level of a Carlson or a Novak, an O'Reilly, a Limbaugh, a Scarborough, etc. Even PBS has largely thrown in the towel on inviting liberals on the air, cutting back the post-Bill Moyers *NOW* to a half-hour and following it with a show for Carlson and another for the extremist, self-described "wild men" of the *Wall Street Journal* editorial pages. Carlson is about to get his own show on MSNBC, where, like Scarborough and CNBC's hapless Dennis Miller (rating, 0.1), he will chase the O'Reillys and the Hannitys of Fox for a part of the right-wing-audience pie. The mercy killing of *Crossfire*, while welcome on many levels, removes just about the only opportunity for cable viewers to hear the liberal perspective at all.



On Fox and MSNBC, viewers are given only Alan Colmes-type faux liberals. On the Sunday shows like *Meet the Press*, the split is most often between the fire-breathers like Novak or William Safire and center-right conservatives like David Broder. Liberals need not apply.

If you were wondering where the line that cannot be crossed by conservative pundits doing the Administration's bidding is, Armstrong Williams, a 45-year-old black conservative who is a favorite on all these shows, discovered it. As *USA Today*

reported, Armstrong accepted payments totaling nearly a quarter-million dollars to pimp the Administration's position on the No Child Left Behind law on both radio and TV. The arrangement, which came at taxpayer expense, throws into sharp relief just how closely entwined conservative pundits have become with this Administration and with the conservative movement in particular. ("The conservative press is self-consciously conservative and self-consciously part of the team," Grover Norquist explains. "The liberal press is...conflicted. Sometimes it thinks it needs to be critical of both sides.")

Washing the \$240,000 through a public relations firm in which he is a partner, Armstrong put his newspaper column and his TV and radio appearances at the service of the Administration. The contract stipulated that a public relations firm hired by the Education Department would "arrange for Mr. Williams to regularly comment on N.C.L.B. during the course of his broadcasts," that "Secretary Paige and other department officials shall have the option of appearing from time to time as studio guests" and that "Mr. Williams shall utilize his long-term working relationships with 'America's Black Forum'"—a black news program—"to encourage the producers to periodically address the No Child Left Behind Act." Williams explained that while he knew he was in rough waters journalistically, he took the cash because the law "is something I believe in." (Memo to Mr. Rove: For a cool mill, I'll believe you found Saddam's WMDs.)

Williams has been fired by Tribune Media Services, which distributed his column, but I'd be surprised if he's kept off the cable networks very long. MSNBC has invited a known plagiarist, Mike Barnicle, to host a show there. Pat Robertson agreed with Jerry Falwell that America got what it deserved on 9/11, but CNN still uses him as an expert commentator on Middle East affairs.

The Williams episode also raises the question of how many other conservative propagandists are on the receiving end of Administration payola. We know that local TV stations have shown the Administration's fake news reports, distributed by CNN, featuring Karen Ryan to promote its lousy new Medicare law. The Office of National Drug Control Policy used the same tactic to help stations fool viewers with illegal "covert propaganda" programs, according to the GAO. The revelation of these tactics forced CNN to change its policies to disallow their use. Good for them. And good for them for canning *Crossfire*. But what, for goodness' sake, Mr. Klein, about Novak?

ARTICLES



PETER O. ZIERLEIN

Turning Up the Heat on Bush

ROBERT L. BOROSAGE

For a nanosecond after November's election defeat, the Democratic unity forged by the radical provocations of George W. Bush seemed intact. From the corporate-funded Democratic Leadership Council to Howard Dean's new Democracy for America, Democrats drew similar conclusions from the election about what needed to be done: Challenge the right in the so-called red states and develop a compelling narrative that speaks to working people—don't simply offer a critique of Bush and a passel of "plans." Champion values, not simply policy proposals. Don't compromise with Bush's reactionary agenda. Expose Republican corruption, while pushing electoral reform. Stand firm on long-held social values, from women's rights to gay rights. Confront Bush's disastrous priorities at home and follies abroad.

But this brief interlude of common sense and purpose quickly descended into rancor and division. Peter Beinart of *The New Republic* and Al From of the DLC rolled out the tumbrels once more, calling on Democrats to purge liberalism of the taint of MoveOn.org, Michael Moore and the antiwar movement. Apparently anyone who worries about the suppression of civil liberties at home, doubts that the reign of drug lords in Afghanistan represents the dawning of democracy, prematurely opposed the debacle in Iraq or isn't prepared to turn the fight against Al Qaeda terrorists into the organizing principle of American politics is to be read out of their Democratic Party. Then, normally staunch Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi floated for chair of the party former Con-

gressman Tim Roemer, a New Democrat distinguished mostly for his opposition to women's right to choose, his vote to repeal the estate tax and his ignorance of grassroots politics. Consolidating its corporate backing, the DLC solemnly warned against "economic populism" or "turning up the volume on anti-business and class welfare schemes"—despite the corporate feeding frenzy that is about to take place in Washington and Bush's slavish catering to the "haves and have-mores," whom he calls "my base."

After a year in which progressives drove the debate, roused and registered the voters, raised the dough and knocked on the doors, the corporate wing of the Democratic Party is trying to reassert control. Its assault on MoveOn.org and the Dean campaign—the center of new energy in the party—is reminiscent of 1973, when corporate lobbyist Bob Strauss became head of the party and tossed out the McGovern mailing list, insuring that the party would remain dependent on big-donor funding.

This time, however, the entrenched interests aren't likely to succeed, no matter who becomes party chair. That's because progressives have begun building an independent infrastructure to generate ideas, drive campaigns, persuade citizens, nurture movement progressives and challenge the right. It includes a range of new groups such as MoveOn.org, Wellstone Action, Progressive Majority, the Center for American Progress, Air America, Working America and America Coming Together, along with established groups that have displayed new reach and sophistication

such as ACORN, the NAACP, the Campaign for America's Future (which I help direct) and the League of Conservation Voters. These groups—and their state and local allies—came out of this election emboldened, not discouraged. Just as the infrastructure that the right built drove the Republican resurgence, these groups and their activists—not the party regulars or the corporate retainers—will stir the Democratic drink.

The challenge to the electoral malfeasance in Ohio provided an early example. Inside the Beltway, protesting the President's electors was unimaginable. But progressive organizers, together with third-party activists, liberal lawyers, Internet muckrakers and civil rights groups, kept the heat on. Representative John Conyers responded with a report detailing the outrages in Ohio, where the Secretary of State—shades of Katherine Harris—was co-chair of the Bush campaign. The Rev. Jesse Jackson and others called on senators to support progressive House legislators who were demanding a debate. When Senator Barbara Boxer stood up, the public learned more about the shabby state of our democracy and the need for drastic electoral reform. The lesson is clear: When progressives move, Democrats will follow. "Don't expect this place to lead," says Representative George Miller. "Organize and force us to catch up."

As the buildup to his inaugural address shows, Bush's provocative agenda, which unified movement progressives and party regulars in the last election, will help organize the opposition in Bush's second term. By posing a continued threat to America's future, Bush also provides the opportunity for movement progressives to frame a large argument about the country's values and direction. Progressives should be mobilizing unremitting opposition to Bush's wrongheaded course, and demanding the same from their elected representatives.

A majority of Americans already express doubts about Bush's handling of foreign and economic affairs and the Iraq War. These doubts will increase as Bush pursues an economic policy that rewards the few while the many lose ground, fails to respond to the broken healthcare system, opposes a living wage and defends trade and tax policies that accelerate the flight of jobs abroad and the decline of incomes and security at home [see John Nichols, "A Fight We Can Win," page 13].

Bush's drive to privatize Social Security, the centerpiece of his agenda, will expose the right and put Republicans at risk. Bush touts a fraudulent immediate crisis in a program that's in relatively good shape to rationalize deep cuts in benefits while borrowing \$2 trillion so Wall Street can feed on the savings of citizens. Progressives will use the fight over privatization to contrast the benefits of shared security with the risks of the right's policies, which leave citizens on their own in a global economy of accelerating instability. Opposition will enable progressives to forge a broad coalition ranging from the Catholic Conference to the AARP and the AFL-CIO. This fight to defend America's most successful retirement and antipoverty program can and must be won.

Bush's new budget will call for extending tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans while cutting investment in education and

healthcare. This offends the common sense of most Americans and offers progressives the opportunity to challenge the President's perverted priorities while making the case for public investment in areas that Americans agree are vital to their families and our country's future. Bush's pledge to pack the courts with zealots will mobilize progressives in defense of equal rights, women's right to choose and corporate accountability. (Spooked by Senator Tom Daschle's defeat in South Dakota, many Senate Democrats are skittish about this battle, and will need to feel the heat from the activist base of the party.) The debacle in Iraq indicts the militarist unilateralism of the Bush Administration and provides progressives with the obligation to push for an exit strategy from an occupation that a majority of Americans now oppose. In this effort, the antiwar movement can make strategic alliances with much of the realist establishment, from George Bush Sr.'s national security adviser Brent Scowcroft to growing portions of the uniformed military as well as intelligence and State Department professionals.

At the same time, progressives should develop and push positive ideas for change: minimum- and living-wage campaigns, progressive tax reform, strategic initiatives like the Apollo Project for good jobs and energy independence. A "blue-state strategy"—elaborating a state and local agenda on

such issues as healthcare and education reform—can provide models and demonstrate the attractiveness of progressive ideas.

None of this will be led by the lobbyists and retainers of the Democratic Party machine, such as it is. In the House, minority leader Pelosi will keep the caucus generally unified in opposition to the Bush agenda, but House boss Tom DeLay brutally locks Democrats out of the room whenever he pleases. Progressive champions like Jan Schakowsky, Hilda Solis, John Conyers, new Black Caucus chair Mel Watt, Barney Frank and others will help guide and support outside progressive mobilizations. The barons of the Senate are less organized and more frightened, as illustrated by minority leader Harry Reid's bizarre public acceptance of the idea of Antonin Scalia as Chief Justice. Senators Dick Durbin, Jon Corzine, Barbara Boxer and newly elected Barack Obama will help define the debate, but external pressure will be vital.

All stripes of Democrats agree on the need to persuade voters, not simply mobilize the base. But persuasion requires committed activists, passionate in their cause, ready to enlist and challenge their neighbors. Progressives haven't yet made up for the decline of union halls, nor matched the right's ubiquitous media clamor. But the pathbreaking house parties organized by MoveOn.org and the Dean campaign, and the extraordinary training provided by Wellstone Action, provide new models for educating activists and encouraging them to organize their neighbors.

So forget about the chattering classes and the corporate wing of the party, now fantasizing about purging the new energies unleashed in the last election. What matters isn't what they say in Washington, but what progressives do on the ground across the country. We have just begun to build. The radical agenda of the Bush Administration—and its abject failure—will continue to set the stage not for a retreat to the center but for a fierce, passionate reform movement. ■

*"Don't expect this place to lead.
Organize and force us to catch up."*

—Representative George Miller

A Fight We Can Win

The results of the last election of 2004 could foretell the first serious defeat for the Bush Administration's agenda in the new Congress. The election, a December runoff for an open US House seat representing Louisiana's Cajun country, was supposed to be an easy one for Republican Billy Tauzin III. After all, he was the son of a retiring congressman, who had the support of the entire state and national GOP establishment in a district that had just backed Bush by a comfortable margin. Pitted against Tauzin was Democrat Charlie Melancon, a former legislator without a big name or big-name backers. But Melancon had an issue: He promised to do everything in his power to block Congressional approval of the proposed Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). Melancon said that while Louisiana may have taken hits from the ten-year-old NAFTA, "CAFTA could be a knockout we may never recover from." And, he promised, "when I'm in Congress, no one will need a petition to guarantee my vote against trade deals that are bad for Louisiana's workers."

Despite a last-minute campaign swing on Tauzin's behalf by Vice President Dick Cheney, Melancon won. His name has thus been added to the list of certain votes against CAFTA, a scheme to undermine protections for workers, the environment and communities that corporate lobbyists see as barriers to trade between the United States and El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras and the Dominican Republic. That's bad news for the White House, which is aware of the close divide in Congress over trade issues but which desperately wants to get CAFTA approved this year. The Administration signed CAFTA last May, but had to delay the required consideration by Congress because it did not want a trade debate to blow up before the election.

Bush and his aides describe CAFTA as an essential element of their economic and political agenda, and even suggest that extending free trade is a tool for combating terrorism. This passion is not motivated merely by the desire to make it easier for multinational corporations to set up shop in the free-trade zones of San Salvador and Managua—many of them, particularly textile firms, have already done so; CAFTA would simply speed up an established pattern. Rather, what is important to understand about CAFTA is that it is considered a "watershed pact," meaning that its approval is seen as essential to clearing the way for agreements with other countries throughout the Western Hemisphere and as far away as South Africa and Thailand. Larry Weiss, executive director of the Citizens Trade Campaign, a coalition of labor, religious and community groups, says that if Congress rejects the agreement "the corporate free-trade agenda will be in deep trouble." In particular, the sweeping Free Trade Area of the Americas agreement, currently being negotiated, could be dealt a severe setback.

Bush's Congressional allies acknowledge that they are in a tight spot. "CAFTA is still the President's number-one trade priority. It will be the key trade vote in Congress this year," Representative Kevin Brady, the Texas Republican who is the Administration's trade-policy point man in the House, said in early January. Shaken by the Melancon victory, which was noted by House Republicans who represent districts where CAFTA's implementation could threaten the viability of sugar and textile

industries, the Administration wants the agreement approved before Congress debates a Social Security overhaul and tax and tort law reforms. "The window of opportunity right now is open," a trade official recently told the *Washington Times*. "With CAFTA, the longer it sits around and the longer forces against it marshal themselves, the more difficult the fight could be later on."

To be implemented, CAFTA needs endorsement from both houses of Congress. The Senate will probably give its OK, so the House is the battleground. When in 2001 the House approved by a single vote the Administration's request for "fast track" authority to negotiate trade deals, twenty-one Democrats sided with the GOP leadership. In the new Congress, however, seven of those "free-trade Democrats" are gone. And there is growing dissension in Republican ranks. Concerns about record trade deficits, as well as complaints from constituents who worry that their jobs will be the next to go, have weakened the traditional GOP faith that free trade is an economic cure-all. "I think a lot of members have moved away from simply saying they are pro-free trade to saying they favor trade but want to look at the deals themselves," says Representative Mark Green, a Wisconsin Republican.

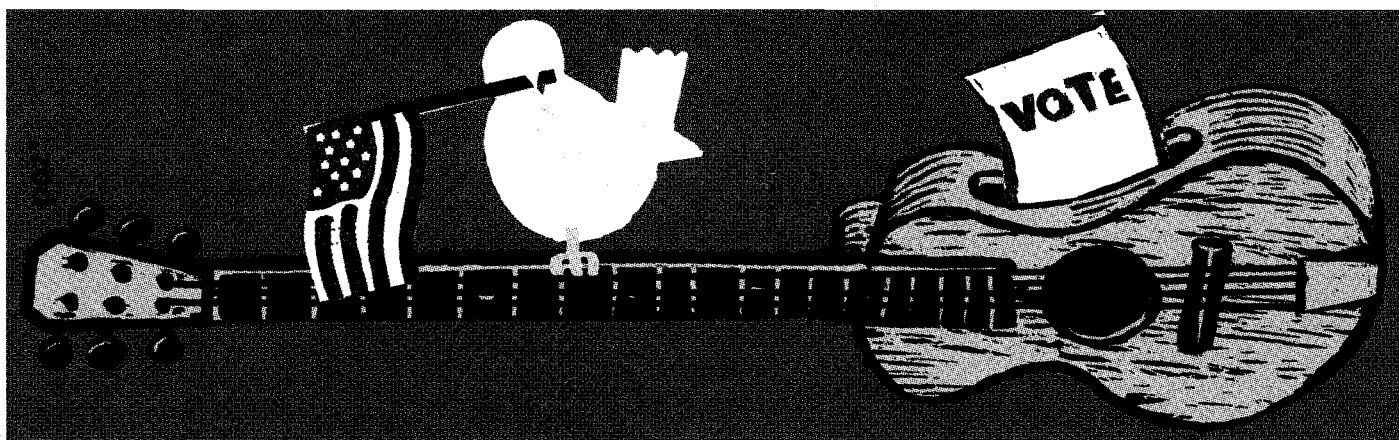
Representative Sherrod Brown, who wrote the book *Myths of Free Trade* and who is expected to lead Congressional opposition to CAFTA, says, "The key is to make sure that members who are on the fence feel heat early." This means that foes of the corporate free-trade regimen are in a race against time. The US Chamber of Commerce and other business lobbying groups are preparing a major campaign to pressure House members to back CAFTA; members from both parties can expect to be reminded that backing CAFTA will put them in the good graces of groups that write big campaign-contribution checks. But recent developments, including the Melancon victory and the easy re-election of Wisconsin Senator Russ Feingold, who made opposition to free-trade pacts a central theme of his campaign, have also made them aware that, at least in some parts of the country, trade may have become a potent-enough issue to trump traditional political advantages.

While the new Congress was being sworn in, fair-trade activists from across the country gathered in Washington to plot strategy and begin lobbying. The coalition is broader than in the past. Traditional critics of free-trade pacts, like the AFL-CIO and Global Exchange, are on board, but so are a growing number of green groups—the Sierra Club, for example, is warning that CAFTA rules blocking barriers to trade could undermine the ability of local governments to protect the environment. And solidarity organizations like the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador and Witness for Peace, as well as religious groups with histories of involvement in Central America, argue that CAFTA will do far more for the bottom lines of multinational corporations than it will ever do for the poor in Latin America.

The goal is to use the first weeks of the new term to get enough members of the House to express opposition that the Administration will decide not to press for a vote. That could happen. Says Brown, "Whether they back off because they don't think they can win a vote, or if we actually beat them on the floor, if they don't get CAFTA in 2005 the President will have been denied an important piece of his agenda. And we have it in our power to deny him that piece."

JOHN NICHOLS

THE CONCERNS RAISED IN 2004 WON'T GO AWAY. AND MUSICIAN ACTIVISTS SHOULDN'T EITHER.



Music for Change

JENNY TOOMEY AND ROB ROSENTHAL

Now on the street tonight the lights grow dim/The walls of my room are closing in/There's a war outside still raging/You say it ain't ours anymore to win/...Well we made a promise/we swore we'd always remember/No retreat, baby, no surrender

—Bruce Springsteen

This past fall saw the most musical presidential campaign in over fifty years, since the days when Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie and other members of the People's Songsters played for the third-party candidacy of Henry Wallace. The Vote for Change tour presented major stars like Bruce Springsteen, Jurassic 5 and the Dixie Chicks to hundreds of thousands of fans. Russell Simmons's Hip Hop Summit Action Network and Sean Combs's Vote or Die tour brought voter registration and messages of political engagement to young people of color and to communities often ignored by the political process. From stadium shows to coffeehouses, punk rockers, rap artists, rockers, country stars and folkies focused on the election; the Air Traffic Control project (www.airtrafficcontroltower.net) documents more than 300 election-related music events focused on progressive change.

But for all that activity, the youth vote was widely described as "disappointing," and thus the efforts of the musicians were deemed unsuccessful—even a failure in some people's eyes. Exit polls suggested that only 17 percent of voters were 18 to 29, the same percentage as in 2000.

Were these results really so disappointing from the progressive point of view? It depends on how you look at it. Youth voting participation may not have grown faster than other groups', but keeping pace with the largest voter turnout in three decades meant

raising turnout from 42 percent of potential young voters in 2000 to 51 percent in 2004, which translated into more than 4.5 million more young voters than in 2000, according to the Center for Information and Research on Civil Learning and Engagement. In the ten most contested states, the youth turnout was 64 percent, 13 percentage points higher than in 2000. These voters disproportionately voted progressively: While Gore beat Bush 48 percent to 46 percent among voters 18 to 29 in 2000, Kerry won that age group 54 percent to 44 percent. Youth voters, in fact, were the only age group that gave a majority of votes to Kerry.

The real results, then, might be better thought of as mixed: less than many had hoped for, perhaps, but certainly significant and trending progressive. One can't help but conspiratorially wonder if musicians' success in engaging disenfranchised voters inspired political operatives and pundits to pre-emptively derail them as ineffective.

There's also an entirely different way of thinking about what happened—a longer view that tries to put this past year's effort into historical perspective. In the early days of a movement, things can look bleak. Today, for example, we celebrate the victories of the civil rights movement, but in 1963, according to Julian Bond, civil rights activists thought, "We're never going to see the end of this thing. These people will murder us all, they'll burn us out, they'll drive us out, they'll stomp us out." Yet just a year later Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act; a year after that Congress passed the Voting Rights Act; and three years later the Civil Rights Act of 1968 outlawed discrimination in housing.

The closest parallel to this year's efforts by musicians might be Wallace's 1948 Progressive Party run for President. It began, as Richard Reuss has chronicled, with an agreement between the Wallace campaign and the People's Songsters (negotiated by folk song collector and producer Alan Lomax) that every political meeting would feature a song leader, and for every speech there would be a song. Further, the Progressive Party would fund and distribute a national song booklet so people could sing along.

Jenny Toomey, who has played in many bands, runs the nonprofit Future of Music Coalition, which works at the intersection of music and policy. Rob Rosenthal, a professor of sociology at Wesleyan University, is the composer of the rock opera Seattle 1919 and the director of Fuse Music, which produces albums of the music of social movements.

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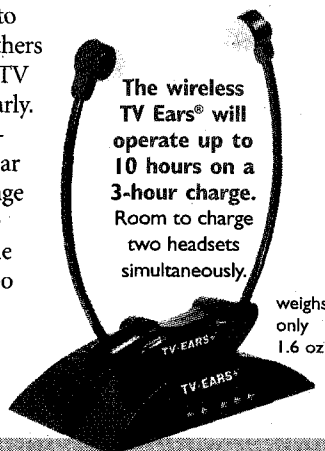
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—Robert F., M.D., California

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Few doubted the singing campaign was having a profound effect. But when the results were tallied, Wallace had received barely more than 2 percent of the vote. Songsters were angry and disillusioned; some were despondent. "Why did our songs not reach in and touch deep enough to cause the hand to push the C row handles in that voting booth?" asked Woody Guthrie.

Yet fast-forward a decade and already there were signs of a growing wave of politically minded musicians who would spearhead the folk revival, support the civil rights movement, infiltrate rock and roll, and eventually provide much of the inspiration for the great mass movements—and electoral campaigns—of the 1960s. Who were their models? Seeger, Guthrie and the rest of the People's Songsters. Through Bob Dylan and other musicians inspired by that vision and model, the notion of the politically charged singer/songwriter ripped apart the Tin Pan Alley notion of bland, inoffensive popular music and helped change the country in ways that still influence the culture we all live in today. But none of that was visible—perhaps even conceivable—on the day of the Wallace defeat.

The efforts of musicians in the Kerry campaign will have a life and an effect that, in all likelihood, will go far beyond that campaign. "Whether movements are immediately successful or unsuccessful, they are part of creating a constituency that will continue, and part of entering into an ongoing dialogue about what is right and wrong," Peter Yarrow—of Peter, Paul and Mary—told an interviewer a decade ago. "That dialogue I consider to be essential, so even if you lose a round, you have no alternative but to go forward, believing that one day you will succeed."

Musicians, don't despair now! The concerns you had, the issues you raised, won't go away. The cultural division we hear so much about is not a reflection of a gaping difference in the real interests of blues and reds but the ability of some to frame those interests in ways that speak to divisions instead of mutual concerns, that play on fear and loathing instead of hope and respect. Music has the ability to speak across divides. Surely, we need that now more than ever. "Go on ahead and throw some seeds of your own," as one of your number, Jackson Browne, once sang. And somewhere down the line, there'll be a harvest. ■

Big-League Radio

George Bush had best be careful when he fiddles with the radio dial in the presidential limousine on Inauguration Day. Instead of the soothing blather of his favorite right-wing talk-radio sycophants, he could face an aural assault from a 250-pound ex-football star named Ed Schultz, who is prone to exclaiming, "We're getting hijacked by Bush and his neocon fascists." Starting the same week the President begins his second term, Schultz, a fiery Midwestern populist who has turned Bush-bashing into a radio phenomenon, will be on the air in DC.

Gaining a coveted birth on the capital city's radio dial is the latest coup for Schultz, a veteran broadcaster whose national show started airing on two stations—in Langdon, North Dakota, and Needles, California—a year ago. Now it's on more than seventy stations and the XM and Sirius Satellite networks. In addition to Washington, Schultz has cracked the Chicago, San Francisco, Boston, Detroit, Seattle, Minneapolis, Phoenix, Miami and Denver markets. By comparison, right-wing radio kingpin Rush Limbaugh was on in only fifty-six markets, most of them small, after his first year. And the liberal Air America network, with its bigger budget and celebrity-rich roster, is on in about forty—although it too is experiencing postelection growth and will be hitting the DC airwaves in January. Gabe Hobbs, vice president in charge of talk-radio for the Clear Channel behemoth, says Schultz is "the 800-pound gorilla" of an unexpected new radio format: liberal talk.

What is it that works about Schultz? For one thing, he comes from radio. "I'm here to do a good radio show first," he says. "If you go into this with political aspirations, or thinking you're going to change your country, you're going to fall on your face." The former quarterback knows a thing or two about hurting his face, and his ego—and also about recovering. After the former NCAA Division II passing champion got turned down by the pros, he went into sports announcing in Fargo, North Dakota. Eventually, he got his own local talk show and, at the prodding of the

woman he eventually married, started discussing issues like homelessness and the Upper Midwest's lingering farm crisis. Schultz is not a cookie-cutter liberal: He hunts, eats red meat and is the first to point up when he believes Democrats are boneheads. "I think I have the old traditional Democratic values," says Schultz, 50. "I think I represent the people who take their shower after work. I'm as much a populist as I am a progressive."

He's also quick-witted, funny and just over-the-top enough to draw an audience. One of Schultz's most enthusiastic Fargo listeners was North Dakota Democratic Senator Byron Dorgan, an old-school progressive populist who had grown increasingly alarmed at the dominance of the radio airwaves by conservative talkers. With encouragement from Dorgan and a few others, Schultz started exploring the prospect of going national. He knew that more-prominent figures, from Mario Cuomo to Jim Hightower, had tried to be the liberal Limbaugh. And he knew radio programmers had come to dismiss the idea that there might be an audience for something other than round-the-clock right-wingers. But, says Schultz, "I just didn't buy it. I was on radio in Fargo doing liberal talk-radio and getting high ratings."

After laying the groundwork, Schultz made his move last January. Since then his show has changed many minds. Howard Dean hails him as "a tremendous voice for Democrats." John Kerry made three appearances (Schultz complains, "Kerry and his people really did not understand radio the way Bush and his people did"). Potential 2008 presidential contenders, from Hillary Clinton to Russ Feingold, have begun appearing. Schultz says they're smart to come on—not just because his show is hot but because radio is the medium of the future for progressives. "You're not going to win elections anymore on an editorial page; you're going to win elections with a constant repetition of themes that finally get to people. And that happens on radio," he says. "Progressives better get on radio, because radio is where the message is delivered—and we've proven over the past year that it doesn't have to be some Limbaugh-clone, right-wing message." JOHN NICHOLS

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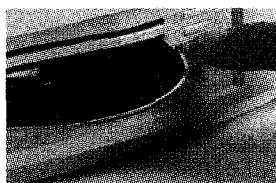
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UKRAINE'S CONTESTED ELECTION WAS A CALL TO ARMS FOR AMERICA'S PUNDITRY.

The Media's New Cold War

STEPHEN F. COHEN

Thirteen years after the end of the Soviet Union, the American press establishment seemed eager to turn Ukraine's protested presidential election on November 21 into a new cold war with Russia. Still worse, its greatest enthusiasts were not the usual Russophobes but influential opinion-makers and publications reputed to be exemplars of balanced, moderate, even liberal, outlook.

An essential element of the last, forty-year cold war was manichean, double-standard thinking on both sides that relentlessly vilified the other, denied it had any legitimate national interests outside its own borders and blamed it for every conflict. The result was to maximize differences, minimize mutual understandings and inspire a nearly catastrophic nuclear arms race. Consider, then, recent commentary in the mainstream American press on the US-Russian conflict over Ukraine, which might not have ended with the victory of the candidate favored by Washington, Viktor Yushchenko, on December 26.

Its basic premise was that events in Ukraine were, in the alarmist formulation of *Washington Post* editorialist Jackson Diehl, "disturbingly reminiscent of...1947-48" (Dec. 6). His colleague at the *Post*, Anne Applebaum, was more Churchillian: "Looking back, we may...see 2004 as the year when a new iron curtain descended across Europe" (Nov. 24). Not surprisingly, the sole cause of this fateful possibility of "a renewed cold war," in the equally foreboding words of *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof (Dec. 15), is said to have been "massive and malign Russian intervention in Ukraine" to help Moscow's favored candidate, Viktor Yanukovich, as the *Post* charged repeatedly in a torrent of editorials (Oct. 31, Nov. 23, Nov. 25, Dec. 2).

Considering that Russian President Vladimir Putin had courted the West for five years, even taking the unprecedented step of publicly endorsing President George W. Bush's re-election, how was the Kremlin's "remarkably Cold War" campaign for Yanukovich, as the *Post*'s editorial-page editor Fred Hiatt denounced it (Dec. 13), to be explained? The possibility that Russia may have a legitimate security or other national interest in Ukraine, to which it has been intimately, even familially, related for centuries by geography, traditions, language, religion, economics and intermarriage, was flatly ruled out. Indeed, according to an approving report in the *Times* by Elisabeth Bumiller (Nov. 30), Washington "Russia specialists say [Putin's] involvement in Ukraine is his most serious offense yet in American eyes." (Apparently not in Ukrainian eyes: In a survey done at



the end of December 2004, 83 percent of Ukrainians expressed having a "good" opinion of Russia, and 50 percent even regretted the end of the Soviet Union.)

Nor was it asked if Putin might have been reacting to the well-known (to the Kremlin, at least) US "involvement" in Ukraine on behalf of Yushchenko. The indignant complaint that Moscow organized a "mass influx of Russian celebrities" to promote Yanukovich (Stephen Sestanovich, *Post* op-ed, Nov. 19), for example,

seemed especially disingenuous in light of a State Department official's boastful testimony to a House committee on December 7 that the US government had sent its own legion of notables to Ukraine. They included Senators John McCain and Richard Lugar, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, former President George H.W. Bush, former Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and Madeleine Albright and former NATO commander and Democratic presidential candidate Gen. Wesley Clark.

Even leaving aside Putin's retort that an election more democratic than the protested one in Ukraine can hardly be expected in US-occupied Iraq this month, there is another, evidently forgotten, American precedent. In a repeated "news analysis," a *Times* correspondent (Steven Lee Myers, Nov. 24; similarly, Dec. 19) assured readers that the Kremlin leader's great offense was having "stepped on accepted diplomatic protocol by campaigning so overtly on Mr. Yanukovich's behalf." Perhaps Putin thought his conduct was accepted protocol based on the Clinton Administration's flagrant "campaigning" for the re-election of America's "friend," Russian President Boris Yeltsin, in 1996. That "intervention" included exceedingly undiplomatic boosterism, a \$10 billion IMF loan, US political strategists dispatched to Moscow to advise Yeltsin's campaign, attempts to pressure a liberal rival to drop out in his favor and effusive apologies for both his pro-oligarchical economic policies and his murderous war in Chechnya.

(An important sidebar: Nostalgia for Yeltsin, "who embraced the West," as Erin Arvedlund reminisced in the *Times* on December 2, informed much of this American commentary. Indeed, according to Kristof, "the West has been suckered by Mr. Putin. He is not a sober version of Boris Yeltsin." Not noted, and still less explained, is that Yeltsin is probably the most despised political figure in Russia today and Putin certainly the most popular by far.)

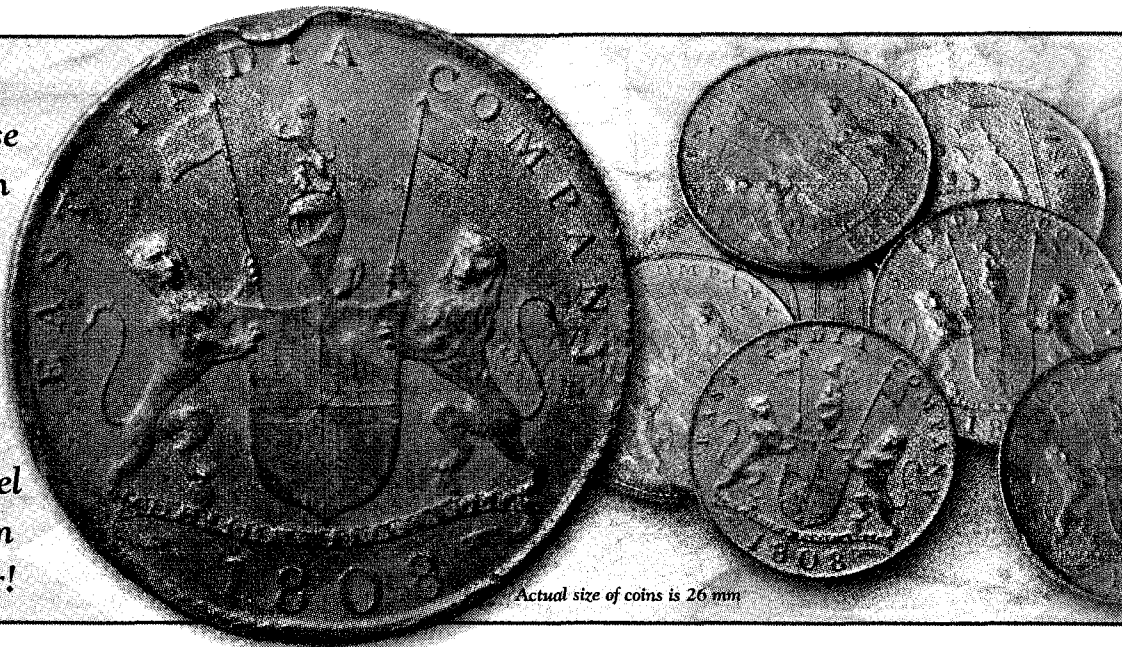
Instead of considering the role of Russia's national interests and US behavior, most commentators, especially the *Post*'s, insisted relentlessly that Putin's conduct in Ukraine was driven by a "crude neoimperialism" and was "the centerpiece of a concerted and dangerous Russian imperial strategy" throughout neighboring states once part of the Soviet Union (*Post* editorial and Diehl op-ed, Dec. 2, 6; similarly, editorials Nov. 23, Nov. 25, Dec. 21, Dec. 26, Diehl op-ed, Jan. 3). It is here that the press's double standard

Stephen F. Cohen, professor of Russian studies and history at New York University, is the author of *Failed Crusade: America and the Tragedy of Post-Communist Russia* (Norton).

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abandons all pretense of objectivity: In most of these former Soviet regions where the Kremlin is accused of "imperial meddling," from the Baltics in the West and Georgia in the South to the states of Central Asia, there are now US and NATO military bases, with more being planned. They too go unmentioned, along with the essential question, widely discussed by scholars, of whether they are part of an ever-expanding American empire.

Double standards can produce strange onsite reporting. Visiting Moscow, Applebaum was shocked that even an 18-year-old Russian woman studying at an American college was "really upset" by the prospect of a pro-US government in Ukraine. The young woman tried to explain: "If all of these countries around us join NATO...Russia will be isolated." But Applebaum was unmoved, traducing the woman's concern as a "belief that Russia has a right to an empire" (*Post*, Dec. 15). What kind of reasoning, we may ask, causes an American journalist to construe a young Russian's worry about her country's military encirclement as "imperial nostalgia"? (Would the same be said about US anxieties over the appearance of Russian bases in Canada, Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America?)

Russians see behind US proclamations of 'strategic partnership' a triumphalist, winner-take-all policy toward post-Soviet Russia.

If Washington, unlike Moscow, is not engaged in "imperial meddling" in the former Soviet territories, why has it been so involved with Ukraine's politics? The official and standard editorial answer is that US motives are entirely altruistic: As several editorials and well-funded democracy activists have assured us, the United States is "seeking not to recruit a new Western client but to defend the democracy and independence that most Ukrainians want" (*Post* editorial, Nov. 25, and, similarly, Michael McFaul op-ed, Dec. 21). That is, the *Post* continued, "the real struggle in Ukraine is not about geopolitical orientation; it is about democracy," insisting that to think otherwise was an "absurdity" (Dec. 2 and 26). In a similar but more avuncular vein, a *Times* editorial (Dec. 4) advised Putin "to abandon the foolish notion that someone is trying to steal 'his' Ukraine," which a *Boston Globe* editorial (Dec. 28) dismissed as "Putin's paranoia."

No one in Russia's political class believes such assurances, not even its rapidly dwindling pro-American faction, and with good reason. In the same *Washington Post* editorial pages that have become the vanguard of the neo-cold war crusade, the columnist Charles Krauthammer revealed a very different meaning of the Ukrainian conflict: "This is about Russia first, democracy only second.... The West wants to finish the job begun with the fall of the Berlin Wall and continue Europe's march to the east.... The great prize is Ukraine" (Dec. 3).

Krauthammer's unsentimental candor confirms the Kremlin's growing alarm over the Western bases gathering around Russia like a tightening noose. But if it needed weightier confirmation, Russia got it from Richard Holbrooke, erstwhile candidate for Secretary of State in a Democratic administration and leading spokesman for what passes for foreign-policy thinking in what remains of that party, speaking now in his bipartisan capacity.

Just back from Kiev, Holbrooke exulted over Ukraine's impending "final break with Moscow" and urged Washington to "accelerate" its membership in NATO, which "virtually defines

our core zone of security in half the world" (*Post* op-ed, Dec. 14). With the kind of experienced diplomacy certain to reassure Moscow about this further (nonimperial) encroachment, Holbrooke told Chris Matthews on *Hardball* (Dec. 13) that a President Yushchenko should immediately be invited to Washington to "address the joint session of Congress." Holbrooke wasn't free-lancing. The *Post's* "not-about-geopolitical-orientation" editorials have been inconsistent or duplicitous, calling at the same time for NATO to welcome Yushchenko's Ukraine "with open doors" (Dec. 10; similarly, Oct. 31 and Dec. 26), a policy still being pushed on its op-ed page in the new year (Steven Pifer, Jan. 1).

The conflict over Ukraine alone may not be enough to launch a new cold war against Russia, but the US press's indictment of Putin, a leader it once hailed for his "commitment to building a democracy" (Michael Wines, *Times*, July 9, 2000), has been growing rapidly for more than a year. It began in earnest in October 2003, when the Kremlin jailed Mikhail Khodorkovsky, then Russia's richest oligarch and owner of its largest oil company, Yukos, on charges of fraud, embezzlement and tax evasion. Ukraine and Yukos, now being broken up and returned to state control, are regularly cited together as prime evidence that Putin, and Russia itself, are hopelessly authoritarian and without "minimal standards" of democracy, rule of law and private property (Myers, *Times*, Dec. 19). The *Globe* columnist Thomas Oliphant and *Wall Street Journal* editorialist Holman Jenkins Jr. were even more damning. The first anathematized Putin's Kremlin as "Russian thugs masquerading as a government" (Dec. 21), while the second equated Putin with Saddam Hussein (Jan. 5), an association implying the need for US action.

And not merely that. Putin, according to the *Times* columnist Kristof, is "guiding Russia...into fascism," a line also being promoted by neocon cold warriors such as former CIA director James Woolsey. Lest readers think they might have been better off with the Soviet Union, whose leader Mikhail Gorbachev did more than anyone else to end the last cold war in 1989, Kristof quickly adds: "Still, a fascist Russia is a much better thing than a Communist Russia." (Larger questions aside, I think instinctively of the many Jews who survived fascist death camps in Eastern Europe only because they were liberated by "Communist" soldiers.) And lest *Nation* readers think that only American journalists are capable of such hyperbolic commentary, the trendy British historian Niall Ferguson, now at Harvard, warned readers of the *Daily Telegraph* (Jan. 1) that Putin may be becoming a Hitler, "a fully fledged Russian führer," and an equal "threat to the rest of the world."

Most Russians see all of this very differently. Hearing the US charges against Putin, they wonder why Washington backed the "pro-Western" Yeltsin so enthusiastically in the 1990s when he destroyed an elected parliament with tank cannons, organized several elections at least as "fraudulent" as the invalidated one in Ukraine and arranged the unlawful oligarchical looting of state property. (Ukrainians, incidentally, might wonder why their outgoing president, Leonid Kuchma, also being vilified by the American press, was so grandly feted by the US government in Washington in 1996 and was even given

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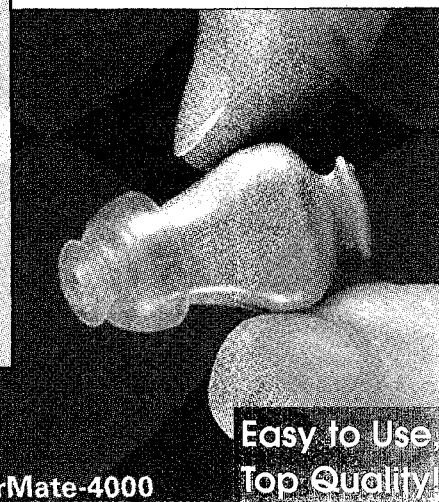
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Above all, Russians see, behind Washington's proclamations of "strategic partnership," a triumphalist, winner-take-all policy toward post-Soviet Russia. Ukraine and other Soviet republics were part of their security; now Washington is demanding them for "our core zone of security." (Indeed, Diehl, writing in the *Post* on January 3, now urges a US policy that would result in something well beyond mere cold war—promoting a Ukraine-like "struggle" not only in Belarus, a former Soviet people even more intimately related to Russia, but "even in Russia" itself.) So too with Yukos oil. Once it belonged to the Russian state, whose impoverished citizens saw it as part of the nation's wealth that might be their salvation; but Khodorkovsky was on the verge of selling his "privatized" controlling stake to a US oil giant.

It is right to wish democracy well everywhere and, in this connection, easy to be critical of Putin's policies at home and toward Ukraine. (The extent to which democracy actually triumphed in Ukraine, as heralded almost unanimously in the US media, depends on whether the very large and well-organized pro-Yushchenko crowds in the streets, the "orange revolution," intimidated the Supreme Court into ruling in his favor and the Parliament into changing the electoral laws while the electoral process was still under way.) But the American adage "There are two sides to every story" never seems to apply even to post-

Communist Russia. Was it really Putin, or only Putin, who "dusted off cold war vocabulary" (Arvedlund, *Times*, Dec. 2); resorted to "anachronistic East-West terms" (*Post* editorial, Dec. 2); treated Ukraine "like a geo-strategic prize" (Bumiller, quoting a Bush Administration official, *Times*, Nov. 30); and represented the "specter of this new iron curtain" (Applebaum, *Post*, Nov. 24)?

Manichean allegations are an augury of cold war, as is something else. Among the most odious practices of the forty-year cold war—always in the name of freedom and democracy—was the casting of doubt on the patriotism of anyone who challenged its orthodoxies. When the editor of *The Nation* cited reports that both Russia and the United States had been deeply involved in Ukraine's politics, the *Post* editorialist Applebaum slurred her (my wife, I confess) as a "freedom-hater" (*Post*, Dec. 1). A "pro-democracy" missionary, in an instructive example of undemocratic discourse, lumped "left-wingers in *The Nation*" with Putin and the dictator of Belarus (McFaul, *Post* op-ed, Dec. 21). And in an editorial comment in *The New Yorker* (Dec. 20/27), the "liberal" George Packer revived the practice in its fullest form: "*The Nation* [is] once again taking the Russian side of the Cold War."

Which "cold war" do Packer and the others have in mind? Evidently, a new one already under way—at least in influential American circles. If so, much is likely to follow, none of it good for democracy in Ukraine, Russia or anywhere else. ■

Letter From Chile

by Peter Kornbluh

The marbled corridors of the venerable Tribunal of Justice in downtown Santiago, deadly silent during the years of the military dictatorship, are now filled with the bustle of lawyers, clerks, police detectives and ministers pursuing past crimes of state. Chilean judges are not known for giving press conferences, but on December 13 several dozen reporters from local and international news organizations were waiting when Judge Juan Guzmán stepped out of his office at 1:35 PM after filing his decision on prosecuting Gen. Augusto Pinochet.

"Pinochet has been declared mentally fit to undergo criminal investigation," Judge Guzmán told the large crowd, which included victims of repression and their families. He then announced that he had ordered Pinochet placed under house arrest and indicted for nine disappearances and one murder relating to Operation Condor—a Chilean-led consortium of secret police agencies that conducted hundreds of acts of state-sponsored terrorism in the Southern Cone and around the world in the mid- and late 1970s. Gasps echoed through the hall, then a ripple of applause, and then the sound of shrieks and tears as those who had lost husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, during

Santiago

Pinochet's seventeen-year regime reacted. When the Chilean Supreme Court announced on January 4 that it had rejected Pinochet's appeal of Guzmán's ruling, mayhem once again broke out in the same hall.

The indictment has the most immediate meaning for those directly touched by the actions of Pinochet's military. For the relatives of those missing and murdered, and those who survived the torture camps, the Pinochet prosecution is a vindication of their efforts to keep the cause of truth and justice alive in a society that has largely preferred to dismiss, rather than confront, Chile's dark past. Coming the same week that the Chilean Congress was finalizing a law that would provide a modest monthly payment as compensation to thousands of people imprisoned and tortured during the Pinochet era, it offered a far more important moral reparation to these victims: the possibility that Pinochet would actually be judged.

The decision to prosecute Pinochet comes amid a flurry of activity around the cause of human rights. Since November, almost every day has brought a groundbreaking legal ruling, new indictment, dramatic announcement or event that has maintained the focus of the nation on the horrors of the past. The debate on whether and how to redress the human rights crimes of the Pinochet era—a debate long repressed by the Chilean military, right wing and post-Pinochet civilian governments—has esca-

Peter Kornbluh, author of The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability, recently returned from a visit to Chile.

lated exponentially. "This is a Pandora's box," says Elizabeth Lira, one of Chile's leading psychologists and a member of the national commission that recently compiled a massive report on torture by Pinochet's forces. "I don't know where it stops."

The National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture on which Lira served, known as the Valech Commission for its chairman, Monsignor Sergio Valech, submitted its findings to the government in November. The 1,200-page report catalogued more than 27,000 confirmed cases of imprisonment and the most grotesque forms of torture, which, it noted:

was used as a tool for political control through suffering. Irrespective of any possible direct or indirect participation in acts that could be construed as illegal, the State resorted to torture during the entire period of the military regime. Torture sought to instill fear, to force people to submit, to obtain information, to destroy an individual's capacity for moral, physical, psychological, and political resistance and opposition to the military regime. In order to "soften people up"—according to the torturers' slang—they used different forms of torture.... The victims were humiliated, threatened, and beaten; exposed to extreme cold, to heat and the sun until they became dehydrated; to thirst, hunger, sleep deprivation; they were submerged in water mixed with sewage to the point of asphyxiation; electric shocks were applied to the most sensitive parts of their bodies; they were sexually humiliated, if not raped by men and animals, or forced to witness the rape and torture of their loved ones.

On the evening of Sunday, November 28, Chilean President Ricardo Lagos went on Chilean television to release the report to the nation. (It was posted on a government website, but no hard copies or translations as yet exist.) From the report, Lagos told Chileans, he now understood the "magnitude of the suffering, the insanity of the intense cruelty, the immensity of the pain," and offered a small compensation package and free healthcare for the victims as a way to "repair the wounds." In a Chilean variant of Santayana's famous dictum, Lagos eloquently concluded that in order to avoid repeating the past Chileans could "never again deny it."

For the government, the torture report and the compensation package fulfilled Lagos's commitment to address the Pinochet era and resolve the festering human rights issue once and for all. Instead of closure, however, the issuance of the report has fully opened the door to a national dialogue over the crimes of the military dictatorship and those civilian collaborators who facilitated the regime's dirty work. The highly contentious debate, playing out in a flood of forums, interviews, articles, meetings, resolutions and declarations across government agencies and civil society, revolves around two essential issues: public accountability for both government and nongovernment contributors to the repression of the Pinochet era; and judicial reckoning for those military officers who gave the orders, held the electrodes, pulled the triggers and disappeared the bodies.

At the center of the growing clamor is the Chilean military. When the first postdictatorship *Report of the Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation* was released in 1991, documenting the murders and disappearances of 3,100 Chileans,

the military (still commanded by Pinochet himself) denounced its "bias and distortion" and dismissed its conclusions. Now, under the leadership of Commander in Chief Gen. Juan Emilio Cheyre, the military is waging a concerted public relations effort to de-Pinochetize the armed forces and distance itself from the egregious crimes committed by its own institutions.

Indeed, denial is no longer a politically viable option. On November 5 General Cheyre pre-empted the release of the torture report by publishing an institutional *mea culpa* in Chile's leading newspaper, *La Tercera*. He abandoned the military's line—promoted by Pinochet himself—that if abuses had been committed they were isolated acts of individual officers and soldiers. The military, he wrote, had taken "the difficult but irrevocable decision to assume institutional responsibility for all past actions that warrant punishment and were morally unacceptable."

On December 7, after the report was released, Cheyre used the graduation of an Army cadet class as a well-publicized forum to disavow the atrocities of the

Pinochet era, inviting victims and their families to sit in the front row and hear speeches from leading activists and lawyers—and Cheyre himself—on respect for human rights.

But other pro-Pinochet sectors of Chilean society still refuse to acknowledge complicity. As *The Report of the National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture* pointedly noted, the horrors of the Pinochet regime "had the support, explicit at times, and almost always implicit, of the only branch of the State that was not a formal part of that regime: the judiciary." With their hallowed institution accused of ignoring or rejecting all legal entreaties from human rights victims and their families during the dictatorship, the eighteen members of the Chilean Supreme Court met to study the Valech Commission report on December 8. In a statement released the next day, the president of the Court, Marcos Libedinsky, defensively rejected all charges. There was "no credible evidence," he claimed, "that distinguished magistrates could have conspired with third parties to allow for unlawful detentions, torture, kidnappings, and murders."

The Supreme Court position so strained credulity that even the Christian Democratic Party—itsself a collaborator with the Pinochet regime after the coup—denounced it as "sad, disheartening, lamentable, and almost shameful"; and President Lagos openly criticized the judges for failing to admit that they had acquiesced in the atrocities of the military dictatorship. But when the government party newspaper, *La Nación*, published a cover story titled "La Cara Civil de la Tortura"—The Civil Face of Torture—along with photographs of what the paper called "los Top Ten" Chilean civilian elites who had facilitated Pinochet's repression, the editor was publicly berated by Lagos administration officials for practicing inflammatory journalism.

That action, as well as others, suggests that the Lagos administration is sensitive to rumbling on the right that the fallout of the Valech report be contained. "The government has undertaken a major challenge with uncertain consequences over which it could easily lose control," stated a December 10 lead editorial in Chile's conservative daily, *El Mercurio* (owned by Agustín Edwards, who

In a variant of Santayana's dictum, President Lagos told the nation that to avoid repeating the past, Chileans could 'never again deny it.'

is listed as *numero uno* on the Top Ten list of regime collaborators). The torture report, Edwards's paper complained, was supposed to "soothe the wounds, not reopen them."

What really rattles the Chilean right and the military is not an accounting but the prospect of being held accountable. In his televised speech releasing the torture report, President Lagos conspicuously avoided all references to identifying the torturers and prosecuting them. His administration soon announced that the testimonies and working papers of the Valech Commission would be kept confidential for fifty years—a decision that the commissioners oppose, and that has raised suspicions among Chile's human rights groups that the government is sequestering critical evidence to impede future judicial proceedings. Indeed, various associations and organizations representing Pinochet's many victims are indignant over the government's efforts to shift the focus away from prosecution of those responsible for human rights crimes while pushing a minimal financial compensation package—about \$190 a month—for torture victims. "Justice is the principal method of reparation," insists Pedro Matta, a survivor of the infamous Villa Grimaldi torture camp.

It remains to be seen how, or even if, Chile's tribunals will process thousands of torture cases that could derive from the Valech report. But it is clear from several recent rulings that the momentum for justice that would bring to trial some of the worst human rights abusers under the Pinochet regime can no longer be suppressed. In November the Supreme Court ruled that the amnesty law passed by Pinochet to protect his officers from prosecution for human rights crimes did not apply to the case of Miguel Angel Sandoval, a leftist disappeared by the DINA, Pinochet's secret police. The decision clears the way for the imprisonment of former DINA director Manuel Contreras and sets a precedent for other cases involving officers who had hoped to hide behind the amnesty law. In December, Lieut. Col. Mario

Manríquez Bravo was indicted as the "intellectual author" of the murder of Chilean folk singer Victor Jara following the September 11, 1973, coup. With his appeals rejected, Manríquez has been incarcerated pending trial. And earlier this month, ten high-ranking members of the DINA were indicted for disappearing eight Chileans, who became part of Operation Colombo—a crude, macabre effort to falsify the fates of 119 missing political prisoners by arranging the appearance of corpses on the streets of Buenos Aires and planting propaganda claiming that they had died in a battle between militant leftists in Argentina.

Beyond the Condor prosecution, Pinochet himself has been the target of significant legal proceedings that could lead to other trials on terrorism and corruption charges. In early December a Chilean court ruled that he could be prosecuted as the "intellectual author" of the 1974 car-bomb assassination in Buenos Aires of his immediate predecessor as Army commander, Gen. Carlos Prats, and his wife. On Christmas Eve a special investigation into Pinochet's illicit sources of wealth determined that between 1985 and 2002 he had secretly stashed \$16 million—twice the previously reported amount—in several accounts at the Riggs National Bank in Washington, DC. And on January 6 authorities raided Pinochet's office in downtown Santiago, finding four false passports in his name and carting off computers and files containing potential evidence. A decision to prosecute Pinochet on charges of corruption, embezzlement and tax evasion is expected soon.

"He is a person who has finished his life in a miserable way," observes Elizabeth Lira. Indeed, as of January 5 the former dictator finds himself under house arrest, with military police guarding the doors of his country estate. At 89, he has lived long enough to read a recent cover story in *La Tercera*—"Government and Army Plan Funeral of Augusto Pinochet." There will be no official homage paid to the former dictator. State funerals, the Lagos administration has made clear, are reserved for presidents who were democratically elected. ■

LETTERS

C O N T I N U E D

(Continued From Page 2)

Schwed, his repartee not sparkling. His wit came out of his work, rubbing against odd characters like a little chap living in the Dixie Hotel (near the *New Yorker* offices), immortalized by him as "The Honest Rainmaker." Joe's conversation was about whatever he was writing at the moment, giving one the privilege of hearing what would later appear in print.

The never-published *Time* series on which we worked has been the subject of speculation. Some of it was based on exhaustive lists of adjectives culled from hundreds of issues, comparing, say, "corpulent labor leaders" with "stout corporation executives." Liebling particularly delighted in dissecting the contributions of Whittaker Chambers, whose cover stories *Time* considered masterpieces of prose. Liebling skewered a number of cracked metaphors, such as an opera curtain, in a piece on Marian Anderson, opening like a mouth (as if curtains opened down, instead of up). Liebling was also involved

with efforts of the French cultural establishment in New York to publicize the Resistance during the German occupation of their country (for which he received the Legion of Honor, proudly sported in his buttonhole).

Why did the pieces on *Time* and the *Chicago Trib* never see the light of day? A colleague at *Colliers* told me that at a meeting of publishing executives, Time Inc. agreed to a favorable accounting of *Colliers'* paid circulation in return for suppression of Liebling's prose. (Soon after, *Colliers* disappeared.) I never heard any explanation for the nonappearance of the *Trib* pieces. Of course, with his gift for making lemonade out of lemons, Liebling did find in his Chicago experiences inspiration for his famous "Second City" piece. (Historians seeking more information on the *Time* saga can consult my papers in Cornell Library's Liebling collection.)

As Liebling's career was great, his life was unrewarding. Not working, he was lonely, often at loose ends, hungry for companionship. He

had a deep vein of sweetness and sympathy, which contributed to his rapport with those he wrote about. Long after he and Lucille parted, he maintained a close relationship with Lucille's daughter. He surely consumed inordinate amounts of food, often second lunches, his increasing girth testimony to this. I was far from New York City when he died in 1963; but I heard from Jack Flagler, another former "Talk" reporter and Liebling leg-man, that Liebling was miserable because of losing his appetite. I suspect what put him in the hospital was a disorder of his digestive system, and I think he died there of pneumonia.

We occasionally dined with Joe's mother, a small woman who closely resembled him and called him "Abbott." JAMES MUNVES

CORRECTION

■ Re Vivian Gornick's "Stanton's Wisdom" [Jan. 10/17]: Darwin's *The Origin of Species* was published in 1859, not 1857.

BOOKS & THE ARTS

The Commerce of Commemoration

ANDREW RICE

I first saw the World Trade Center's ruins a few weeks after September 11, 2001, at a time when the sulfurous stench of disaster still lingered over lower Manhattan.

A prominent real estate developer invited me to view the wreckage from an adjacent office building. I was writing a newspaper article about the first stirrings

of a debate within New York's real estate community—a fractious coterie of politicians, planners and property magnates—about what might be rebuilt on the spot everyone had come to call “Ground Zero.” Looking down that day, as cranes lifted great bundles of debris, releasing clouds of yellow smoke from the depths of the pile, I was staggered by the enormity of the disaster. Sixteen acres of rubble. Meanwhile, my friend the developer, a smart and practical man, looked out the same window and saw something else: an opportunity. “It looks more and more like a construction site every day,” he said.

Looking back now, it seems premature, and perhaps a bit ghoulish, that the two of us were talking about construction as fliers bearing the faces of the missing still hung limply from lampposts downtown. But, as architecture critic Philip Nobel dryly notes, America reacted to unspeakable tragedy “by returning to first principles.” In New York, that meant building. Just as nature abhors a vacuum, the city cannot abide a void. In those reeling days, many took solace in the notion that those precious acres, empty of all but meaning, might be filled with something that not only commemorated the nearly 3,000 dead but also affirmed that the city, and its aspirations, had survived.

Events moved fast, at times outpacing both mourning and deliberation. Two days after the attacks, Larry Silverstein, the developer who leased the Trade Center, told the *Wall Street Journal*, “It would be the tragedy of tragedies not to rebuild.” He suggested that four fifty-five-story skyscrapers be erected on the property—by Larry Silverstein, naturally. In November 2001, New

York Governor George Pataki announced the creation of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC), a state agency charged with devising a plan for the site. By early the next year, it was holding public hearings. The site was cleared of debris by July, as more than 1.6 million tons of steel, concrete, dust and pulverized human remains were ferried over to a final resting place at the Fresh Kills landfill in Staten Island. Shortly after that, the LMDC conducted a much-publicized architectural competition. Model skyscrapers were unveiled and hotly debated. A winner was chosen: Daniel Libeskind, an architect best known for his dark and contorted design of Berlin's Jewish Museum. On July 4, 2004, less than three years after the World Trade Center's destruction, Pataki, a Republican, looked on as the cornerstone of a new Freedom Tower was laid, just in time for his party's national convention in New York.

This is a remarkable story: one of grit and determination, of unprecedented accomplishment at breakneck pace, amid the harshest possible public scrutiny. So why are the authors of three new books so disappointed? Paul Goldberger's *Up From Zero*, Philip Nobel's *Sixteen Acres* and Daniel Libeskind's *Breaking Ground* approach the redevelopment project from different perspectives. Goldberger, *The New Yorker's* architecture critic, takes an evenhanded insider's approach. Nobel, who covered the story for numerous publications, including *The Nation*, is an unabashed outsider, gleefully dissecting every motive, assumption and plan he comes across in the course of what he calls the “redevelopment follies.” Libeskind, the architect who was toasted and later humiliated, predictably recounts his own heroics in high-flown style, while stooping occasionally to settle some scores. Taken together, these books tell how an experiment

IN THIS ESSAY

SIXTEEN ACRES: Architecture and the Outrageous Struggle for the Future of Ground Zero.

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288 pp. \$25.

UP FROM ZERO: Politics, Architecture and the Rebuilding of New York.

By Paul Goldberger.
Random House.
273 pp. \$24.95.

BREAKING GROUND: Adventures in Life and Architecture.

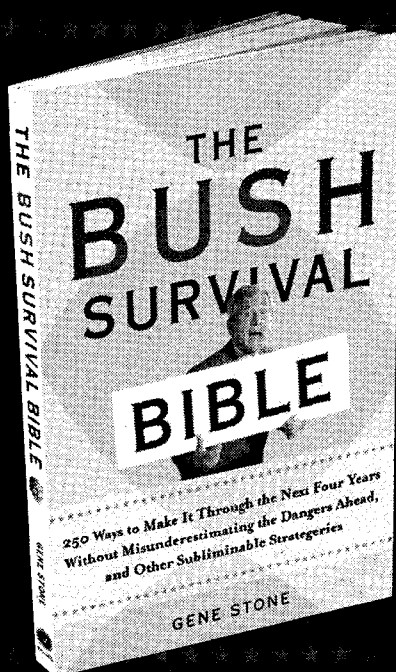
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Andrew Rice covered commercial real estate development for the New York Observer from 2000 until 2002.

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in imagination, born of tragedy and buoyed by hope—hope that New York, in the names of the dead, might create something transcendent—ultimately came to grief.

They have appeared with the same head-long speed that characterized the entire rebuilding initiative. It may seem strange to read assessments of structures that, as of now, remain little more than plastic models and pencil marks. But these books are not premature, because they are not really about architecture. They are about politics, ambition, ego and greed. Architecture, Nobel writes, is "an art that is neither high nor low, an art that gets to be *art* only after locking lips with reality: satisfying a client, securing funds and permits and insurance, getting built." In this case, reality demanded that whatever was constructed on the site of the World Trade Center fulfill two imperatives: First, pay tribute to the dead, and second—but by no means secondary—reproduce the millions in rental revenue generated by the World Trade Center.

Commemoration and commerce could not be easily reconciled. Over the course of 2002 and 2003, these conflicting imperatives clashed in public hearings and private meetings, in conference rooms, art galleries and magazine pages. To mediate the dispute, New York's leaders, again returning to first principles, created a bureaucratic archipelago of agencies and advisory boards. Thus began what everyone came to call "the process."

In his book, the most spirited of the three, Nobel speaks of "the process" as if it were a sentient being, invisibly pursuing its own agenda. In fact, as Nobel himself recognizes, it was a creature of its principal players—the truculent developer, the calculating governor, the blockheaded bureaucrats, the preening architects—who mouthed platitudes about sanctity and art, but mostly had more earthbound goals: making money, winning elections, protecting turf, achieving fame. The process disguised their pursuit of self-interest as an exercise in democracy.

The process demanded that something be rebuilt, quickly, to demonstrate America's resolve (and to promote Pataki's 2002 re-election bid). And since skyscrapers were destroyed, skyscrapers would rise, to send a message to the terrorists (and to shore up Silverstein). Whether new skyscrapers were necessary, whether new skyscrapers were a proper way to pay tribute to the dead, whether new skyscrapers made any economic sense—the process required that these valid questions be shunted aside in the interest of speed. "A deliberative pace,"

Nobel writes, "was precluded by the associated politics of revenge."

Fittingly, a similar irrationality was responsible for the original World Trade Center, a complex that loomed, unloved, 110 stories above lower Manhattan from 1973 to 2001. (In a typically withering aside, Nobel writes that Mohamed Atta, trained as an urban planner in Syria, "merely acted out the will of the towers' many critics.") The brainchild of David Rockefeller, the president of Chase Manhattan Bank, and Austin Tobin, the autocratic chieftain of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the complex was meant to revive the financial district and to stand as a monument to the mighty Port bureaucracy. Instead, it nearly killed the neighborhood. The maligned towers didn't become a fashionable address for high-end tenants like investment banks. At the same time, their 10 million square feet of publicly subsidized office space held down rents in other downtown buildings, dampening the demand for new construction.

It wasn't until the millennial boom that the World Trade Center became profitable enough to interest private developers. In August 2001, Silverstein agreed to pay the Port Authority \$3.2 billion for a long-term lease. Many thought he overspent, but the septuagenarian Silverstein, until then regarded within the industry as a second-rank developer, viewed the Trade Center acquisition as the capstone to a building career. Then, just weeks after the deal closed, his trophy building was gone.

In martyrdom, the towers finally won the love of their city. All along, Nobel points out, the two most popular plans for the site called for rebuilding them just as they were, or for building nothing at all as a commemoration of loss. These ideas were quickly dismissed. Turning the site into a park or a "soaring, beautiful memorial," as former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani suggested, would have deprived Silverstein and the Port Authority of their rental income. Rebuilding the towers as they were would go against current urban planning dogma, which values streets and storefronts over open plazas.

Could it have been different? Goldberger, like many New Yorkers, longed to see commercial considerations set aside; he writes favorably of a discarded plan to put the site to public use as a memorial park, while redistributing the lost office space by building elsewhere in the city. He believes that in the emotionally charged aftermath of the attacks, Silverstein might have been bought out, and the Port Authority might have been convinced to give

up the hallowed ground. (Mayor Michael Bloomberg's administration proposed trading the Port the city's two airports in return for the Trade Center site, an innovative idea that died quietly, after which Bloomberg disappeared from the redevelopment debate.) But the moment passed, the acrid smoke cleared, everyone lawyered up and the process proceeded.

Nobel writes that the process followed its own logic, "a body of managed assumptions that passed for consensus," which allowed "the public and private arbiters of the site to act under the umbrella of conventional wisdom as they navigated the minefield of an unconventional dispute." Public opinion did matter, but only as long as it was expressed within these boundaries of economics and taste. It was quickly decided that some streets truncated by the old World Trade Center would be returned to their prelapsarian states, and that a new rail terminal would be built on the site. Both ideas pleased the city's political elites, who had been weaned on the "new urbanism" model of planning. When an initial round of boxy site plans came under attack, the LMDC decided to invite some of the world's most famous architects to test their imaginations on a master plan. This thrilled the city's aesthetic elites, led by the *New York Times*'s flamboyant architecture critic, Herbert Muschamp, a man who "wrapped his power around himself like a luxurious fur-lined cloak," Libeskind writes. For years, Muschamp had been bemoaning New York's architectural timidity. But the seven teams named as semifinalists in the LMDC's "Innovative Design Study" were heavily weighted toward big-named, big-thinking, big-egoed designers: Libeskind, Peter Eisenman, Lord Norman Foster, Richard Meier, Rafael Viñoly, among others. In December 2002 their visions were unveiled at a televised ceremony. Goldberger writes that it "may have been the most widely covered architectural event in history."

This is where these books get interesting. The redevelopment process's encounter with the world of avant-garde architecture is a tale fit for Tom Wolfe. (Actually, Libeskind's attorney, the ubiquitous Manhattan fixer Eddie Hayes, was the model for Wolfe's character Tommy Kilian, the streetwise lawyer in *The Bonfire of the Vanities*.) As the project lurches toward banality, the characters plot, feud and leak to the newspapers, staging palace coups and office break-ins.

After the public unveiling, the LMDC's selection committee narrowed the field to two finalists: Libeskind, whose design fea-

tured an angular office building with a 1,776-foot spire, and Viñoly's team, which envisioned a pair of enormous latticework towers. Both architects were cast to type, Goldberger writes: "Libeskind dressed in black, with heavy, black-rimmed French eyeglasses and American cowboy boots, while the silver-haired Viñoly kept multiple pairs of eyeglasses on strings around his neck and atop his head." Both spoke accented English, which was strange in Libeskind's case, since, though born in Poland, he was mostly raised in the Bronx. During the three weeks that the committee pondered, the architects did *The Oprah Winfrey*

Show and savaged one another in the press. Viñoly's partisans called Libeskind's plan, which featured a memorial that was sunken underground, "the pit." Libeskind's team derided Viñoly's towers as "skeletons." And Viñoly had other skeletons to worry about: On the eve of the selection committee's decision, the *Wall Street Journal* revealed that the Argentine architect, who had presented himself as a victim of the military junta that ruled his country in the 1970s and '80s, had in fact accepted commissions from the regime.

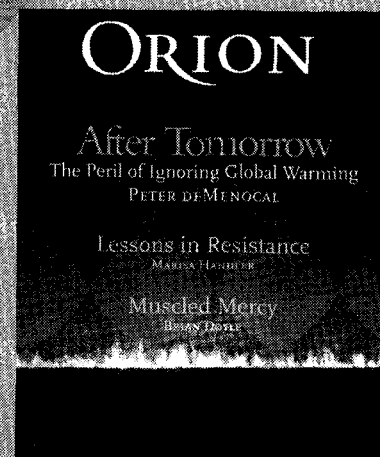
The story was well timed for Libeskind. Nevertheless, on February 25, 2003, the

In the Jan/Feb issue
of Orion Magazine

Reality Weather

Peter deMenocal

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committee picked Viñoly. The news was reported in the next day's *New York Times*. Governor Pataki still had to sign off, but an anonymous committee member told the paper, "We don't expect anyone to overrule us." He was wrong. Pataki ignored the committee and picked Libeskind, rechristening his centerpiece skyscraper "Freedom Tower."

What happened? One explanation can be found in an anecdote Libeskind recounts in *Breaking Ground*. It is worth retelling, because it reveals something about architecture's role within the redevelopment process. Libeskind writes that when the committee was about to go Viñoly's way, Eddie Hayes called Pataki. (Hayes had been advising Libeskind since early in the competition, proving that, goofy glasses notwithstanding, the architect knew how to navigate New York.) Hayes, who roomed with Pataki in law school, simply referred to the governor as "The Guy." Libeskind quotes his lawyer's description of what happened:

And so I'm sitting there...looking at the paper, and I'm thinking, Holy whatever! They lost! And I think to myself, You know it's ridiculous that Eddie Hayes is going to have to push The Guy on something like this, but it's me or nobody. I've seen the model. I know the plans. I know the man. I know Libeskind's the right guy for this. So I call The Guy, and within a couple of minutes The Guy calls me back.

The string was tugged, and The Guy picked Libeskind's design.

So there it is: The commission for arguably the most important architectural project in the history of New York was decided in a phone conversation between the governor and his old law school chum. This turn of events is not surprising. But it does make Libeskind's indignation about his subsequent reverses hard to credit. The power the governor gave, he could (and did) take away. "What played out through 2002 and 2003," Goldberger writes, "was the use of architecture for political ends, not the use of politics for architectural ends."

From there, the story follows a predictable course. Silverstein wants his own architect to design Freedom Tower: David Childs, of the establishment firm Skidmore, Owings and Merrill. Libeskind, after much infighting, is relegated to a subordinate role. What results is a lobotomized version of Libeskind's original plan. A separate competition chooses a memorial design that further departs from Libeskind's vision. Several prominent architects are chosen to de-

sign buildings on the site: Santiago Calatrava, a train station; Frank Gehry, a performing arts center; Norman Foster, an office building. But Libeskind is shut out.

Libeskind feigns pride in the remnants of his plan that remain, but he's halfhearted. The critics are less charitable. Nobel describes Freedom Tower's design as "a mongrel tower with a twist, a false top, and a piercing spire—a speculative commercial office building transformed through the alchemy of the process into an emblem of the process itself." The key word is "speculative." A new incarnation of 7 World Trade Center, an office building also owned by Silverstein, is currently being built without the promise of any large-scale tenants. Renting out the much larger Freedom Tower, a building constructed as a taunt to Osama bin Laden, won't be easy. As an economic proposition, the project evokes memories of the old, empty World Trade Center. "In mid-2004," Goldberger concludes, "the Freedom Tower seemed less to signify innovation than history repeating itself."

The battle between commerce and commemoration was never much of a contest.

It's too early to tell whether the final memorial design, by Michael Arad, will strike the right emotional chord. After all, it must describe a story to which we don't yet know the ending. What is evident, however, is that Arad's work will merely be a component in a large-scale office development, like one of those public amenities—a fountain, a mural, a windswept plaza—developers routinely throw into their projects to win political favor. "How will the dead compete with all this reverence for lost construction?" Nobel asks bitterly.

It's not shocking that profit and politics triumphed over propriety. After all, this is New York. One recent morning, I paid a visit to the World Trade Center site, my first since that fall day in 2001. Strolling down a covered walkway that spans the site, I counted only a few other gawkers, among them an Amish couple from Indiana. The investment bankers bustled past without as much as a downward glance. Truth is, there wasn't much to see. Down below, helmeted workmen scurried about the paved floor of the pit. A giant jackhammer pounded away. Ground Zero was what it was destined to become: a construction site. ■

Beyond Good and Evil

JOHN BANVILLE

LIQUIDATION. By Imre Kertész. Translated by Tim Wilkinson. Knopf. 130 pp. \$22.

FATELESSNESS. By Imre Kertész. Translated by Tim Wilkinson. Vintage. 262 pp. Paper \$13.95.

KADDISH FOR AN UNBORN CHILD.

By Imre Kertész. Translated by Tim Wilkinson. Vintage. 120 pp. Paper \$12.95.

Adorno said, as we all know, that writing poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. This is not to say, as many imagine, that writing poetry after Auschwitz is to be forbidden, or is impossible. The word Adorno used, *barbarisch*, is worth pondering. Presumably he was applying it prescriptively to poets in the same way that he applied it to Stravinsky, whose music he reproached for what he saw as its murky neo-primitivism, as against Schoenberg's pure, clear-sighted modernity. Stravinsky, by fleeing to the prehistoric past of jungle rhythm and sacrificial dance, or, later in his career, by leading the Gadarene regression to an ersatz classicism—"Back to Bach!"—was in Adorno's opinion evading existentialist man's duty to confront his own times in all their complexity and atrociousness.

John Banville is the author, most recently, of Shroud (Knopf), a novel, and Prague Pictures: Portraits of a City (Bloomsbury), an essay.

Of course, poets, like Stravinsky, took not the slightest notice of Adorno's stricture. Indeed, one of the greatest of twentieth-century poets, Paul Celan, not only continued to write poetry after Auschwitz but wrote poetry about Auschwitz itself, if we take "Auschwitz," as Adorno evidently did, as not only the name of a specific and terrible place but as a collective term for all the camps, and for the Holocaust itself.

In *Liquidation*, the latest novel by the Hungarian Nobel Prize winner Imre Kertész to be translated into English, one of the characters, the writer B., or Bee, who was born in the death camp,

applied his whole talent to Auschwitz...

he was a past master and exclusive artist of the Auschwitz mode of existence. He felt that he had been born illegally, had remained alive for no reason, and nothing could justify his existence unless he were to “decipher the code name Auschwitz.”

Early on in the book, Kingbitter, the narrator, if such he may be called, a translator and editor and a friend of Bee's, tells how as a student in the 1960s he chanced upon Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*—Kingbitter, or Kertész, does not name the novel, but the references in the text identify it. In the course of the “adventures of the imagination” that the book took him on, Kingbitter tells us, he was struck in particular by the notion that “the Ninth Symphony had been withdrawn.” (In Mann's novel his protagonist, the composer Adrian Leverkühn, writes an apocalyptic cantata aimed at negating Beethoven's “Ode to Joy.”) Later in *Liquidation* Bee echoes the notion, but in a more positive application, in the posthumous letter his ex-wife, Judit, receives from him after his suicide, instructing her to burn the manuscript of his final novel: “by virtue of the authority I have lived through and suffered for you, and for you alone, I revoke Auschwitz....” To this, however, Judit's present husband, the non-Jewish Adam, retorts: “No one can revoke Auschwitz, Judit. No one, and by virtue of no authority. Auschwitz is irrevocable.”

If this sequence seems complicated, it is only one strand of the vertiginously intricate web of cross-reference, echo and self-contradiction that Kertész weaves both within individual books and between one book and another. Torgny Lindgren, speaking at the Nobel Prize presentation in 2002, remarked how in Kertész's work “the separate parts appear to have grown together, with common root fibers or circulatory systems.” The narrator of *Kaddish for an Unborn Child*, published thirteen years before *Liquidation*—and with an epigraph from Paul Celan's poem “Todesfuge”—also experienced Auschwitz, but as a boy or young man, not as a newborn child, as was the case with Bee. Internal evidence tends to suggest, however, that this narrator is none other than Bee himself, and that *Kaddish* is in fact the novel that Bee's wife Judit burned on his instructions.

Where Kertész's work is concerned, the term “unreliable narrator” is wholly inadequate to denote the twists and turns, the evasions, turnabouts and sheer effrontery of the narrative voice. Still, we have been warned. The epigraph to *Liquidation* is from Beckett's novel *Molloy*: “Then I went back into the house and wrote, It is midnight. The rain

is beating on the windows. It was not midnight. It was not raining.” These, the closing lines of the book, are a devastating and characteristically Beckettian negation of all that has gone before—if it was not midnight, if it was not raining, then there is nothing to prevent us from recognizing that the whole thing is a fiction, which, of course, it is. Yet it would be a mistake to imagine that *Liquidation*, any more than *Molloy*, is the product of postmodernist game-playing. Kertész, like Beckett, is deadly serious—in the case of both writers that adjective is in no way figurative—and his work is a profound meditation on the great and enduring themes of love, death and the problem of evil, although for Kertész, as we shall see, it's not evil that is the problem but good.

Kertész was born in 1929 into a Jewish family so deeply assimilated into Hungarian society that they did not even consider themselves to be Jews. The Nazis took a different view, of course, and in 1944 the young Imre was rounded up with thousands of others of his kind and sent first to Auschwitz and then on to Buchenwald, where he remained until the camp was liberated in 1945. After the war he worked as a journalist, playwright and translator. The awarding of the Nobel Prize in 2002 came largely as a surprise to what used to be called the West, since not many readers outside Hungary even knew his name, although two earlier novels recently reissued by Vintage—*Fatelessness* and *Kaddish for an Unborn Child*—were published under slightly different titles by Northwestern University Press in, respectively, 1992 and 1997.

Of the three Kertész novels translated into English, *Fatelessness*, first published in Hungary in 1975, is the most easily accessible. One might say that it is also the best, save that comparison between it and its two successors would be invidious. *Liquidation* and *Kaddish* are, for lack of a better word, experimental in form and, indeed, in content, while *Fatelessness*, based, closely one assumes, on the author's experience in the camps, is relatively straightforward. It tells the story of 14-year-old Georg Kovcs's abrupt apprehension by the police on the streets of Budapest and his transportation first to Auschwitz and then to the Buchenwald labor camp. Straightforward the book may be, but it is also an extraordinary and devastating testament to the banality of evil—the by now clichéd phrase of Hannah Arendt's is entirely apt here, for what gives the book much of its peculiar power is the plodding doggedness of Georg's effort to report accurately what happened to him, and to make sense of it.

When he arrives at Buchenwald, a “small, mediocre, out-of-the-way, so to say rural concentration camp,” Georg, who had unwittingly survived the selection process at Auschwitz by adding two years to his age, is asked by one of the long-term inmates how he “got mixed up in this here,” and answers: “Simple: I was asked to get off the bus.” It is Georg's tone of sweet reasonableness, his slowness to comprehend fully or to credit the true nature of what Bee in *Liquidation* calls the “corpse-mincing machine” into which he has been flung, that makes *Fatelessness* so harrowing. However baffling, cruel or tormenting the circumstances in which he finds himself, Georg is ever anxious to adduce the simplest, most rational and even most benign explanation for the behavior of those who have been set above him as his masters and tormentors. His attitude to anti-Semitism is entirely understanding. In the opening pages he visits the local baker to present the family's bread coupon:

He did not bother returning my greeting as it is well known in the neighborhood that he could not abide Jews. That was also why the bread he pushed at me was a good half pound short. I have also heard it said this is how more leftovers from the ration stayed in his hands. Somehow, from his angry look and his deft sleight of hand, I suddenly understood why his train of thought would make it impossible to abide Jews, for otherwise he might have had the unpleasant feeling that he was cheating them.

Nor is Georg's own attitude to “the Jews” without its ambiguities. On his arrival at Auschwitz there occurs one of the book's more appalling instances of black and bitter irony, when he catches his first glimpse of the inmates already there, “real convicts, in the striped duds of criminals, and with shaven skulls in round caps”:

Their faces did not exactly inspire confidence either: jug ears, prominent noses, sunken, beady eyes with a crafty gleam. Quite like Jews in every respect. I found them suspect and altogether foreign-looking. When they spotted us boys, I noticed, they became quite agitated. They immediately launched into a hurried, frantic whispering, which was when I made the surprising discovery that Jews evidently don't only speak Hebrew, as I had supposed up till now....

The reason for their agitation, we learn, is that they know that Georg and the other boys of his age will automatically be sent to the gas chambers, unless they pretend to be

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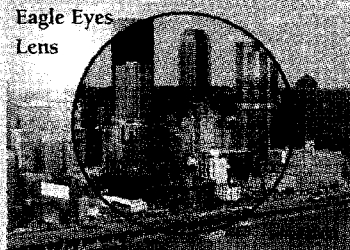
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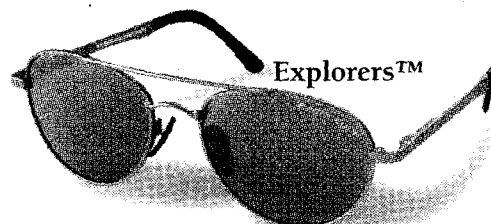
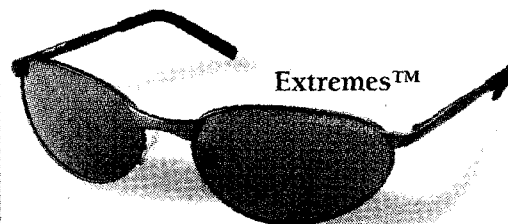
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16, in which case they will be deemed fit for work and spared from extermination.

The title of the book is explained, or at least accounted for, in a remark by another character in *Liquidation*, the philosopher Dr. Obláth: "Man, when reduced to nothing, or in other words a *survivor*, is not tragic but comic, because he has no fate." When at last Georg arrives home, after his year at the heart of the whirlwind, he is regarded less as an object of compassion than of embarrassment, a reminder to those who survived of how little they did to prevent the terrible things that have happened and that are now being firmly thrust into the past. Even the radical journalist who strikes up a conversation with him is baffled by Georg's unwillingness, or inability, to fill the role of victim. When the journalist asks if he will collaborate in writing a series of articles describing to the world the "hell of the camps," he has "nothing at all to say about that as I was not acquainted with hell and couldn't even imagine what that was like." Pressed, he ventures that hell would be "a place where it is impossible to become bored, seeing as how that had been possible in the concentration camp, even in Auschwitz."

Georg explains how time was a help, since each new enormity arrived as another step in a process: "Were it not for that sequencing in time, and were the entire knowledge to crash in upon a person on the spot, at one fell swoop, it might well be that neither one's brain nor one's heart would cope with it." This is something that the journalist, in turn, finds impossible to imagine. Georg is as accommodating as ever: "For my part, I could see that, and I even thought to myself: so, that must be why they prefer to talk about hell instead."

Fatelessness is such a powerful and coolly horrifying work that, for all their fine qualities, its successors may seem hardly more than variations on a theme, making their refinements and discriminations in an area that is, in the Adornian sense, almost beyond contemplation; yet *Liquidation* and *Kaddish* are in their subtle ways just as troubling and profound as the earlier book. *Kaddish* in particular, a breathless, unrelenting monologue in the manner of Beckett or Thomas Bernhard, poses some large and deeply unsettling questions. The narrator tells of an incident in the camps when he was close to death and a man known as "Teacher" returned to him the food ration that he had inadvertently made off with. The gesture is literally fatal, since by keeping the extra ration Teacher might have saved himself, and without it the narrator would certainly have died. Teacher's

selflessness brings the narrator to the conclusion that "what is truly irrational and genuinely inexplicable is not evil but, on the contrary, good," and to put forward a possibility that represents a glimmer of what, in the circumstances, one hesitates to call hope, the possibility that

there exists a pure concept, untrammelled by any foreign matter, such as our body, our soul, our wild selves, a notion which lives as a uniform image

in all our minds, yes, an idea whose—how shall I put this?—inviolability, safe-keeping, or what you will, was for him, "Teacher," the *sole genuine chance* of staying alive, without which his chance of staying alive would have been no chance at all, simply because he did not wish, and what is more in all likelihood, was *unable*, to live without preserving this concept intact in its pure, untrammelled openness to scrutiny. ■

ART

The Rebirth of the Modern

ARTHUR C. DANTO

MoMA 2004

The letterhead of Columbia University, where I taught for four decades, reads in full "Columbia University in the City of New York," not because there is much likelihood that anyone will wonder which Columbia University the letter comes from but because its location is part of its identity. I have always felt

the same thing should be true of the Museum of Modern Art and the City of New York, since they together embody the spirit of modernity. "The Modern," as those of my generation referred to the museum, exemplified modernity through the late Art Deco style of the original 1939 Goodwin and Stone building. As a piece of architecture, it mirrored those parts of the collection that were *moderne* in the strictest aesthetic sense: as heady, clear and swanky as a gin martini. Its emblematic work, *Les Femmes d'Alger*, with its jazzy *art nègre* figures—like African fetishes in the salon of a Parisian couturier—had found the museum and the metropolis to which it really belonged. Nothing like this could be said for the 1984 reconstruction by Cesar Pelli, which was modern not in terms of style but only in being of its moment, and which expressed MoMA's uncertainty about its artistic direction. It was, moreover, a defensive piece of architecture, which closed itself off from the city, drawing walls around its collection, as if to preserve Modernism's embattled purity. Only its bookstore windows opened onto the city. When Kirk Varnedoe and Adam Gopnik installed their vilified exhibition "High & Low" in 1990, it was barely noticed that they had uncovered one of the windows that had been walled up, enabling passers-by to see the art that Claes Oldenburg had shown in the display window of his

"Store" on East 2nd Street in 1962. Those inside the exhibit could see the street life of the city—taxis, trucks, dog-walkers, people pushing strollers—and for a brief moment the barrier between the art and the city all but vanished.

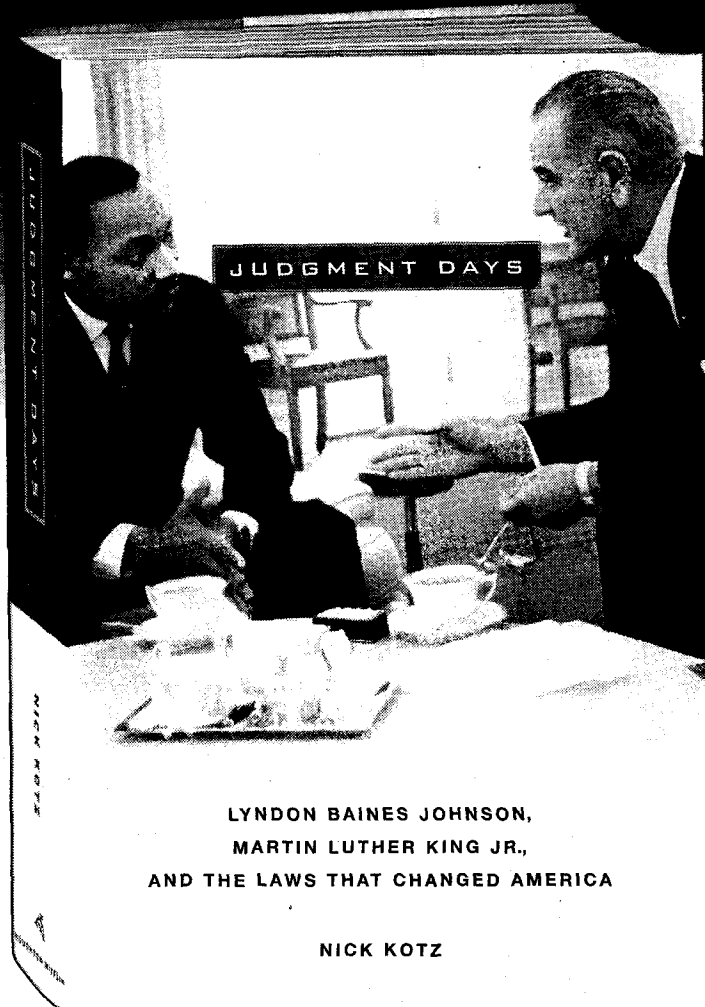
What immediately strikes a visitor to the 2004 museum, designed by Yoshio Taniguchi to coincide with the seventy-fifth anniversary of MoMA, is the way in which the museum is now literally open to the city. The lobby is, in a qualified sense, a pedestrian passage, which one can freely enter and exit; and the upper galleries allow views of New York to enter through generously proportioned windows, as well as the glass-curtain wall facing east. It is as if New York were, as the engine of modernity, acknowledged as an integral part of what the museum exists to show. But one is made conscious of art even if one merely traverses the lobby from one cross street to the other. Upon entering the walkway from 54th Street, one sees Barnett Newman's great sculpture *Broken Obelisk*, designed as a memorial to Martin Luther King Jr., standing on the second floor of the immense atrium and rising to a skylight four floors up. Ordinarily, one encounters this deeply moving work standing on the same level. Seen from below, the inverted shaft of the obelisk seems to descend to earth like a

stalactite—or to point downward like a stylized index finger—rather than rising upward from the point on which it is balanced. The shaft thus acquires an astounding weightlessness, as if it were floating in air.

The people standing around *Broken Obelisk* are dwarfed both by it and by the engulfing space. The disproportion between the sculpture and the human throng reminded me of a device employed by Piranesi in his engravings of ancient Rome. Seeking to bestow the ruins with even more grandeur than they possessed, he reduced the scale of the human figures that stood about them. This is the effect of seeing *Broken Obelisk* together with its viewers. And yet, paradoxically, one does not feel diminished but rather exalted by the space when one ascends into the atrium and becomes a part of it. When Jean-Paul Sartre visited New York City in the mid-1940s, he was overwhelmed by the feeling of great space, which reminded him of the American West. Taniguchi has somehow brought that spatial feeling into the museum, as part of the project of integrating the building with the city.

Thanks to its location in Taniguchi's design, Newman's sculpture stands poised to become one of MoMA's emblematic works—a bit ironic in view of his well-known put-down of sculpture as something you bump into when backing up to get a better look at a painting. Another emblematic sculpture is Rodin's looming figure of Balzac, familiar to most of those who have seen it as an outdoor sculpture, either in the Sculpture Garden of MoMA or in the center of Boulevard Raspail, just before it intersects Boulevard Montparnasse in Paris. *Balzac* has been brought indoors, where it faces the entryway to the collections, with its back to the Sculpture Garden, seen through the glass wall behind it. One of *The Nation's* critics, Elizabeth Robin Pennell, reviewed this work for the magazine in 1898, when it was, as she archly put it, "a standing joke in Paris." Today we are blind to Modernism's scandalousness, and I admire Pennell for not writing it off, though she was uncertain how it could be considered a finished work. A talisman of Modernism's struggle for acceptance, *Balzac* is just the right work to mark the beginning of one's visit. Aesthetically, the burnished bronze looks radiant in the natural light of day and luminous at night. Posted at the base of the grand staircase to the collection whose spirit it encapsulates, *Balzac* is to the new MoMA what the Nike of Samothrace is to the Louvre: a symbol of the triumphant history the museum itself enshrines.

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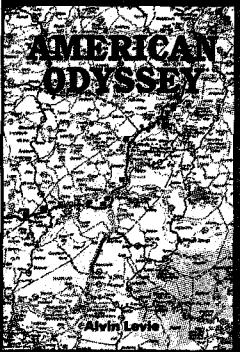


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Mounting Taniguchi's staircase, one is conscious of the helicopter, suspended above one's head like a menacing mobile, not only proclaiming the museum's interest in modern industrial design but making a punning reference to the Calder mobile that used to hang above the Bauhaus staircase in the Goodwin and Stone building. In fact, Taniguchi has re-created the brilliant black-trimmed Bauhaus staircase, now between the second and third floors. There indeed is a Calder mobile, as well as a Mondrian painting, both of which, together with the staircase, evoke the Modernist aesthetic of the original museum. The wonderful Oskar Schlemmer painting of Bauhaus students on the stairway—which used to hang where the Mondrian is now—has regrettably been transferred to one of the galleries on the fourth floor, deprived of its earlier meaning. There is one other referential staircase, between the fourth and fifth floors, both of which are given over to painting and sculpture. It alludes to the staircase of the Shchuchin mansion in Moscow, on the landing of which Matisse's *La Danse* once hung. Shchuchin was one of Matisse's early patrons, and his collection one of the few sites where Russian avant-garde artists could study the kind of modern art that they aspired to create. Each of the staircases in the new building, functional and evocative, thus reflects the aesthetic and historical intentions of MoMA at their best, when architecture and art act as one in imparting Modernism's lessons. The escalators, which dominated the Pelli building's lobby, have been discreetly set to one side.

One also sees *La Danse* through an opening high in the atrium wall. Indeed, there are balcony-like openings at each level onto the atrium floor, through each of which one sees across to *La Danse*, with more and more of the gallery stairway revealed the higher you ascend. The museum is a cat's cradle of crossing sight-lines, so one keeps seeing what I think of as the defining works from various angles. When one stands on the level with the helicopter, one can see *Balzac* below. And of course from one opening onto the atrium, one can see across to the others, as well as people looking over the barriers. As with the view from the lobby into the atrium, other viewers are always part of the scene, which gives the place a tremendous sense of animation. I have never been in a building with so optical an essence, and in which other people by their very presence contribute to its aesthetic impact. In most museums I think of Sartre's famous line from *No Exit*: "Hell is other people." In MoMA, the consciousness of others moving from stage to stage and space to space is so much a part of the experience

that one feels one is always part of a constantly changing work of art. That too makes it feel like New York.

The atrium is clearly the spiritual core of the building, and its floor a kind of piazza, with *Broken Obelisk* destined to become a meeting point, the way Picasso's *Guernica* used to be. But what works for monumental sculpture works less well for the paintings, however large they are. The fact that one is always aware of people on every level somewhat reduces the unequal struggle in scale between the immense height of the atrium's walls and the paintings hung at viewing height from the atrium's floor. It was a huge mistake to hang Monet's *Nymphs* in this space. Even though Monet lived and painted into the 1920s, even though the great paintings of his lily pond, with clouds and their reflections interacting with the floating flowers, influenced—or at least had some affinity in their all-over composition with—Abstract Expressionism, the painting is out of place as well as out of scale. Monet's water-lily paintings were designed for a circular, relatively low-ceilinged room in the Orangerie, as a kind of diorama; and though any one of them is a great treasure, treasures have to be treasured, and not abused. I am sure the wall display is temporary, but space must be found for this work that is consistent with the mission of aesthetic education that *La Danse* serves, and in which the work can yield a meaning without losing a fight with scale. None of the paintings currently on view there really stand up to the pressure the atrium exerts, even if they fare better than the Monet. Brice Marden's calligraphy and Jasper Johns's *Untitled* look drab and drained by all that space and light, and Willem de Kooning's *Pirate*, for all its bright hues, is outmatched by the architecture. Even worse, they become reduced to rectangular patches when seen from the upper openings.

The theory, as I understand it, is that the high ceilings of the museum's second floor were dictated by the anticipated scale of the contemporary work the museum expects to acquire, as it copes with the future of modern art. But very little now displayed, either in the atrium or the side galleries, justifies the height of the spaces. In one of the side galleries off the atrium, there is a marvelous work by the late Felix Gonzales-Torres, called *Perfect Lovers*. It consists of two quite ordinary kitchen clocks, set at the same hour and keeping the same time. One of them will finally stop—will metaphorically die—before the other. Contemporary work like Gonzales-Torres's is capable of

dealing with the greatest of themes—love and death—without requiring immense space. *Perfect Lovers*, a physically small work, is exhibited in a space designed for something as imposing as one or more of Richard Serra's *Torqued Ellipse* series.

It is extremely chancy, moreover, to anticipate the future of art architecturally, or to presuppose that modern art will continue to be shaped principally by painting and sculpture, albeit on a larger scale. Performance, installation and video don't necessarily call for the kinds of spaces required by the classical Modernism so successfully displayed on MoMA's fourth and fifth floors. This is even more true of computer art, which is almost certain to play a significant role in the future. An artist I admire, for the moment without a gallery, makes his work on a laptop, which he recently carried with him to the Art Basel fair in Miami to show to potential collectors. The high ceilings on the second floor boldly project a future that may never come to pass.

The artistic core of the new MoMA consists of the galleries on the fourth and especially the fifth floor, which display the works everyone missed while the museum was undergoing reconstruction: *Starry Night*, *Sleeping Gypsy*, *Les Femmes d'Alger*, *La Danse*, *White on White* and the many others that define Modernist sensibility. The openings I attended were like family reunions—everyone was moved by these familiar and deeply loved pieces, and the meaning of MoMA for New York was palpable in the joy expressed in seeing them again. When I revisited the museum as part of the throng, I was impressed that clusters of people gathered spontaneously in front of certain early Modernist favorites, as they do in front of the *Mona Lisa* or *The Raft of the Medusa*. This did not quite happen on the fourth floor, where the art still raises the questions that Modernism always raised, even if everyone knows them. Warhol, Johns, Twombly and Rauschenberg have entered the canon, and from college courses in "Art Since 1945," everyone is familiar with the late Modernist movements—Abstract Expressionism, Pop and Minimalism. Of course, this art can be seen everywhere now, but its presence at MoMA means that it has become part of a canonical history and taken its place in a narrative of Modernism. Modern art goes on being made, of course, but the story of Modernism as a period has come to an end.

What has not yet come to an end (or so it would seem) is the idea of a canon, so central to the histories of Modernism and MoMA under Alfred Barr and William

Rubin. When Barr purchased one of de Kooning's "Black" paintings in 1948, the message was not only that de Kooning had entered the canon but that the canon had been opened up to American art. Until this acquisition Barr, who personified MoMA, tended to identify Modernism with European art, with rare exceptions like Calder. De Kooning, a Dutch-born American, broke the ice. Even Pollock, whose art Barr at first disliked, was accepted into the canon and now has a gallery to himself on the fourth floor, an entryway to which frames one of Newman's largest paintings, *Vir Heroicus Sublimus*. The South African artist William Kentridge told me that one of the high points of his career was seeing his prints displayed at MoMA with those of the German Expressionists who inspired him. Being in MoMA has really meant something to artists sensitive to their place in history, and one can see why the museum would want to give its authoritative vision of Modernism's narrative an architectural embodiment. But as that vision of art history loses some of its authority, younger artists may no longer feel anointed when their work is acquired by MoMA. If this is true, the galleries devoted to contemporary art would no longer carry the meaning of the upper galleries. The concept of a canon may itself be dated as an art historical reality.

Meanwhile, the light and amplitude of the museum's first five floors establish an aura for the modern art that has made it into its privileged precincts. For whatever reason, Taniguchi's vision deserted him in creating the sixth floor, which is to house temporary exhibitions. The space is wide, low and graceless, and one appreciates by its absence how important to the overall feeling of the museum the atrium is. The glass-curtain wall is blocked by the elevator bank, so one appreciates that it does more than flood our consciousness with the surrounding city. There is some compensation for the space's soullessness in the fact that the panels of James Rosenquist's gigantesque *F-111* can be displayed all on the same wall, the way one now realizes must have been the work's original intention. (Usually it is bent into angles to fit spaces too small for it.) The sixth-floor gallery perhaps communicates the feeling that what will be shown is really not part of what Hegel would call the idea of the modern embodied in the grand architecture below. The five and a half stars it merits make the building well worth a visit in anyone's architectural Michelin. There are not enough stars in the critic's firmament for the art. That is one more thing the Museum of Modern Art has in common with the City of New York. ■

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PUZZLE NO. 2972

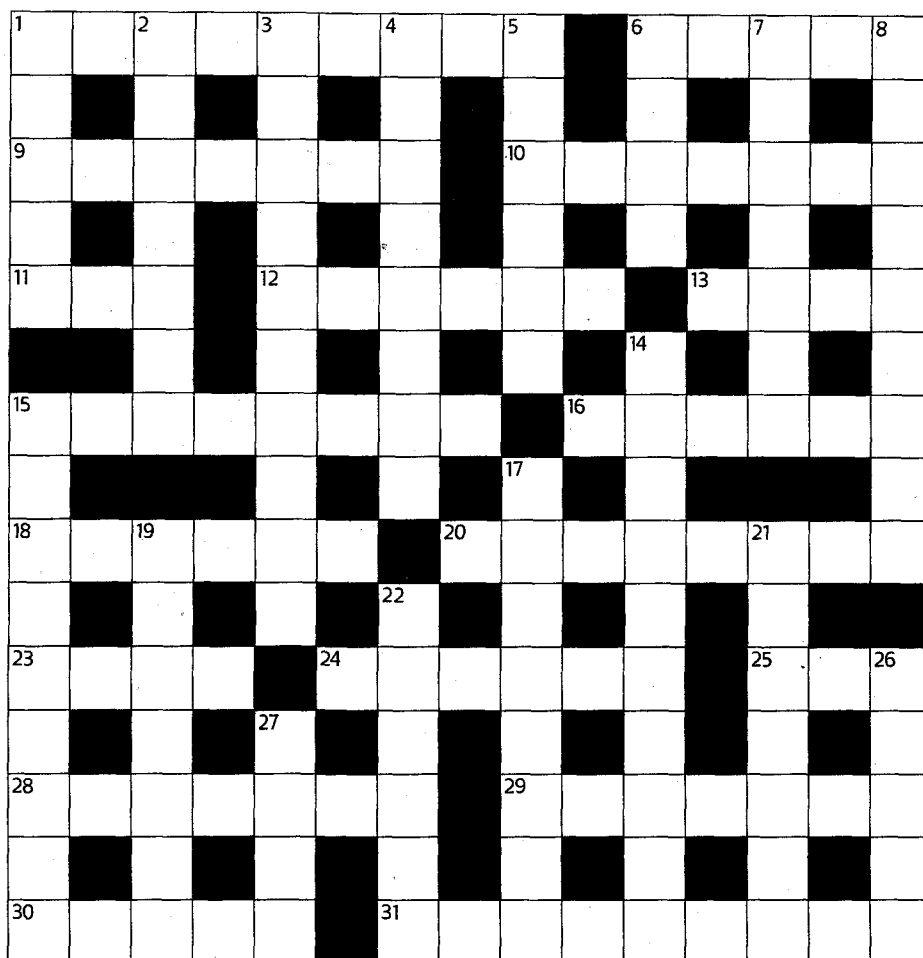
FRANK W. LEWIS

ACROSS

- 1 One's cross is not proper in the street. (3-6)
- 6 and 25 It's formed early in life (probably by parents) but goes pure crazy! (8)
- 9 One takes things in—implicitly, to a fault. (7)
- 10 Went through the leaves rather casually to find neat lines in the flower garden! (7)
- 11, 12 and 13 When your motto should be "*carpe diem*"—and if action isn't taken soon it might turn rotten! (3,4,2,4)
- 15 Just like one of Goldilock's acquaintances, you could find ours firm here. (8)
- 16 Take in something kiddingly, one hears! (6)
- 18 What Astor was looking for, and a product of mine makes it a British craze. (6)
- 20 One who cheers the team on is about to be a substitute for suds, as some might say. (4,4)
- 23 1 down is confused, having no head for what fans are with hobbies. (4)
- 24 If you come across this game, you'll be on the other side. (6)
- 25 See 6
- 28 The Roman sort (not very much different) traveled in opposite directions to find those who conquered Alba. (7)
- 29 South American diplomacy, which may be read to the gathering. (4,3)
- 30 Copies made for the gullible? (5)
- 31 See 1 down

DOWN

- 1 and 31 across What partners who run the "dive" might claim. (5,9)
- 2 The way an Aussie runs off at the mouth! (7)
- 3 Walter Scott's house suggests that at least one Churchman came across for it. (10)
- 4 One who thought the state was exploitive proves the wild lark has Aries rising with the unknown type. (4,4)



- 5 Title, heading, etc., placing a sort of curb around a northeastern state. (6)
- 6 and 14 Point out an opening for a person, when the mat is not a welcome one. (4,3,3,4)
- 7 Father's age might show what you can take up for a hobby. (7)
- 8 and 27 Important times spent by the Communist landlord? (3-6,4)
- 14 See 6
- 15 Sincere sort of fun, but the soldier comes up in dire need of it. (9)
- 17 One who lives in Central America had a bad hound, and hurried after it. (8)
- 19 Tell on someone taking part, perhaps, as a catcher of sorts. (3,4)
- 21 Take a gander at this whip—the cutie might give it a flutter! (7)
- 22 It could be a magic word for toppers, in a way! (6)

- 26 Implies a beer should be available when you touch someone's shoulder. (2,3)
- 27 See 8

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 2971



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A floor lamp that spreads sunshine all over a room, and pays for itself!

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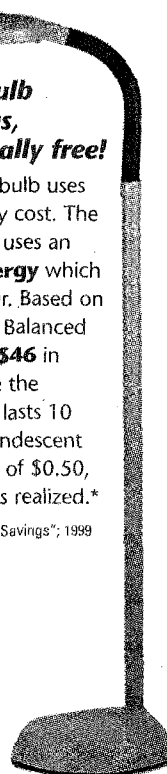
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*Source: "Lighting the Way to Energy Savings"; 1999



Height as shown: 50"

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